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THE HOUSE OF ARMOUR



A Section of Halifax and the Harbor—From the Citadel.

THE HOUSE OF ARMOUR

BY

MARSHALL SAUNDERS

AUTHOR OF

"Beautiful Joe," "Daisy," "Charles and His Lamb," "For the Other Boy's Sake," etc.



PHILADELPHIA

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THE HOUSE OF ARMOUR

CHAPTER I

SCOTLAND THE NEW

IN the southeastern extremity of Canada, jutting out into the blue waters of the Atlantic, holding on to the great mainland of North America only by one narrow arm or isthmus, is the green and fertile little peninsula called Acadie, land of abundance, by the French and Indians, and Nova Scotia, New Scotland, by the baronet Sir William Alexander, when in 1621 it was ceded to him by his most worshipful majesty, King James the First of England.

Projected, pushed out from the mainland as it is, the province is pre-eminently a child of the sea. Her wealth comes from it; her traffic is over it; it keeps her warm in winter; it cools her in summer. Old Father Atlantic, savage, boisterous old parent that he is, dashing so often the dead bodies of her children against her rockbound coasts, is yet her chief guardian and protector, and the one who loves her most.

He is on all her sides, lapping her grassy shores, breaking against her frowning cliffs, and running away up into the land, wide, blue tongues of water, where foreign ships can ride at anchor and give to lovely Nova Scotia their fairest merchandise.

Among all the harbors, among all the bays—and they are long and numerous—can none be found to eclipse the chief and prince of them all, glorious old Chebucto, which hundreds of years ago Indians paddled over and called the greatest of waters. It lies almost midway between the two ends of the peninsula and sends up between smiling shores a long, wide, crystal expanse of water, that is curved like a slightly bent arm and is six whole miles in length. Clear and shining it comes in from the sea, washing around its guardian forts, and with a strong, full tide floating the most ponderous leviathans of the deep right up to the wharves of the capital town of the province, built along its shores.

At all times white-winged ships sail over its waters. Farther north the bays skim over and harbors freeze. Here the waters are always blue and open, and tired ships, bruised and buffeted by the angry winter winds of the Northern Atlantic, can always steal in and find a safe and pleasant anchorage. The shores are gently sloping, the hills are wooded, only the softest breezes blow here. Boreas and all his gang must lurk outside the harbor mouth.

It is with one of these ships that we have to do. Steadily day by day plowing the ocean track that leads from England to the little maritime province, a large passenger steamer had come. Soon she would sight the harbor lights, would make her way to the desired haven.

The evening was cold and still; the time was early December. A brilliant moon in a sky of lovely steely blue was in mid-heaven, staring down at the lighted, busy town, the silent country, the glistening line of the harbor, and the crystal sea beyond.

The hull of the steamer sat on the waters a large, black mass. Its decks were white and as bright as day in the moonlight. The captain stood on the bridge, occasionally speaking, but mostly by signs and gestures making known his wishes. A few sailors were hurrying about the decks and officers were directing preparations made for entering port.

The most of the passengers had gone forward and stood in a group at the bow of the ship, eagerly straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the town they were approaching. A few lingered behind. Among them were two people, a man of a straight, military figure, and a young girl with a dark, brilliant face.

The man observed attentively his youthful companion, making, man of the world that he was, amused comments on her badly suppressed girlish

enthusiasm at being again within sight of her native land.

It was absolutely necessary for her to talk and it charmed him to listen to her sweet, half-foreign voice. At first she had seemed to him to be thoroughly French. Then he had found grafted on her extreme Frenchiness manners and ways so entirely English that she made at the same time an interesting and an amusing combination to him.

They were still well out at sea when she looked over her shoulder and made her first salutation.

"There is Thrum Cap," she exclaimed, "wicked old Thrum Cap, thrusting his bald, sandy head out of the water, pretending to look at the moonbeams. What a tale the old villain could tell!" and she shook her glove so impatiently at him that her companion was moved to ask what power the barren sand dune had to call forth such a display of emotion.

"There are treacherous ledges beneath his shimmering waves," said the girl. "Shall I tell you the tale of the English frigate 'La Tribune,' that was wrecked there in 1797?"

"If you will be so kind," he said gravely, giving her no hint that he was already acquainted with the story of the disaster.

At the conclusion of her recital he gave her an inscrutable look, which she did not perceive.

"You seem—ah—to know a vast deal about

your native land," he said meditatively. "How has all this knowledge been acquired, since you left here at such an early age?"

"By reading, always reading," said the girl restlessly.

"And you are fond of your country," he said.

"Passionately. What else have I to love? Father, mother—both are gone."

"Your friends, acquaintances——"

"Ah, there are too many. Life has been change to me, always change. Imagine me in early youth a young and tender plant. I throw out my tendrils and attach myself to this object—it is snatched away from me; to that one—it too is snatched away; and finally my tendrils are all gone. Suppose the most charming object to come within my reach, I have no tendril to grasp it. Nothing remains but my country."

"That will all change some day," said the man sententiously.

"In what manner?" she asked.

"You will meet some man in whom everything will become merged—friends, country, everything."

"You mean that I shall fall in love?"

"I do."

"Possibly," she said with a gay laugh. "Probably not."

"Why not?"

"Because, as I have told you, I make few at-

tachments; and if I did I never stay long enough in one place for one to mature. This winter I fancied that I was settled in Paris, but you see I am summoned here."

"Leaving sorrowing admirers behind you," said her companion imperturbably.

"According to me—yes."

"You would not overstate," he said hastily; "you are not like most girls."

"Did you never see any one like me?" she asked vivaciously.

"No," he said quietly; "you are an anomaly. A Frenchwoman educated among English people and speaking your own language with a foreign accent—half of you goes in one direction, half in another."

"Ah, you understand me, Captain Macartney," said the girl with an eager gesture. "You will know what I mean when I say that at times I seem to feel in my veins the gay French blood running beside the sober English."

"Yes, I understand you," he said with a smile, and he fixed his gaze admiringly on her dark eyes that were wandering restlessly from shore to shore of the entrance to the beautiful harbor.

"Away down there is the place of wrecks," she said, waving her hand toward the western coast. "Some of my countrymen named it Saint Cendre, and the careless Nova Scotians corrupted it into Sambro. Do you hear that, Captain Macartney?"

The man's glance had suddenly dropped to the sea and he was staring at it as if he were trying to wrest some secret from it. Now he roused himself. "Yes, Miss Delavigne, I hear."

"The old name of the harbor was Chebucto," the girl went on; "Chebook-took—chief haven. The Indian and French names should still remain; it was unfair in Englishmen to drive them out. Is not Acadie more charming than Nova Scotia, and Chebucto than Halifax?"

"Is it not a natural thing that a child should be named after its father?" asked Captain Macartney.

"After its own father, yes," said the girl quickly; "after a stepfather, no. The French owned this province; the English drove them out."

"They deserved to go," said Captain Macartney with some show of warmth.

"Ah, yes, they did at last," said the girl sadly. "But it is a painful subject; do not let us discuss it."

"May I ask you one question?" he said eagerly. "Do you approve of the expulsion of the Acadians?"

"Yes."

"Then you are the most fair-minded and impartial Frenchwoman that I ever met."

"Because I agree with you," she said. "Ah, Captain Macartney, you are like the rest of your sex. Now let us see if we can find the forts lying

cunningly concealed among those hills. This is the most strongly fortified town in Canada, is it not?"

"Yes," he replied, with an inward malediction on her fervor of patriotism. "On that island is a battery, a military camp, and a rifle range."

The girl surveyed with a passionate glance the wooded points of an island they were passing. On a narrow spit of land running out from it was a Martello tower lighthouse.

"It is quite as round and quite as much like a plum pudding as when I left it," she said merrily; "and it fixes on me its glittering eye in the same manner that it did when I, a little child, went down this harbor to countries that I knew nothing about, and the fog bell seemed to cry, 'Adieu, adieu, another gone from the pleasant land.'"

"But you have returned," said the man, biting his lip to hide a smile.

"I have; many have not. You have read of the 'Cajiens of Louisiana and other places. They went but did not return; their sore hearts are buried among strangers."

"And you," he said curiously, "are you going to remain in Canada?"

"Yes," said the girl softly; "I shall never leave it again."

"But your guardians; suppose they——" he stopped abruptly.

"I shall live and die in my native land. They will not prevent me," she said calmly.

He maintained a polite, though an unsatisfied silence.

"We are looking toward the east, we forget the west," said the girl turning around. "See, there is York Redoubt, and Sandwich Point, and Falkland with its chapel—dear little Falkland, 'a nest for fisher people'—and there is the entrance to the Northwest Arm."

For the twentieth time that evening Captain Macartney smiled at the girl's enthusiasm. Her eyes were turned lovingly toward the narrow strip of salt water that runs up like an arm behind the peninsula on which the city of Halifax is built.

At the extremity of the peninsula is one of the loveliest natural parks in the world. The girl's enraptured gaze was turned toward it and she was just about to launch into an ardent enumeration of its attractions, when she was interrupted.

CHAPTER II

MRS. MACARTNEY'S IMPRESSIONS OF CANADA

A BRIGHT-FACED lad with dark blue Irish eyes and glossy hair came hurrying down the deck, his hands thrust into the pockets of his long ulster, his whole expression that of one suffering from extreme cold.

"Are you frostproof," he exclaimed, "that you stand here motionless in this stinging air? I am not surprised at you, Miss Delavigne," and he made her a low bow, "as you are a Canadian, but I marvel at Geoffrey," and he glanced at his brother, "fresh from India's suns as he is. Shall we not have a last promenade, mademoiselle? The cold is biting me like a dog."

Vivienne laughed and placed herself beside him, while Captain Macartney murmured, "There go our guns; we are announcing ourselves."

"Will you not tell me, Miss Delavigne," said the boy in a confidential tone of voice, "about this matter of signaling? I have asked Geoffrey several times, but he only grunts like an Irish pig, and gives me no answer."

"With all my heart, Mr. Patrick," said the girl

with a businesslike air. "From the outposts at the harbor mouth every vessel is reported to the citadel."

"What is the citadel?" he asked.

"It is the fort on the hill in the middle of the town."

"What a quarrelsome set you Halifax people must be," said the boy, "to require so many fortifications and such a number of redcoats to keep you in order."

"Not for ourselves do we need them, Mr. Patrick," she said teasingly, "but for our troublesome guests from the old country." Then hastily, to avoid the wordy warfare that he was eager to plunge into, she went on. "Up there is an island that is all fort."

"Shades of my uncle the general!" he said; "can that be so? Let us go forward and see it."

"A French vice-admiral who ran himself through with his sword is buried on it," said Vivienne, as they proceeded slowly along the deck.

"Hush!" said the boy. "What is mamma doing?"

Vivienne smiled broadly. Mrs. Macartney, the good-hearted, badly educated daughter of a rich but vulgar Dublin merchant, was a constant source of amusement to her. Just now she was waddling down the deck, driving before her a little dapper Nova Scotian gentleman who had become known

to them on the passage as excessively polite, excessively shy, and, like Vivienne, excessively patriotic.

Hovering over her victim like a great good-natured bird she separated him from a group of people standing near, and motioned him into the shadow of a suspended lifeboat.

"Ducky, ducky, come and be killed," said Patrick wickedly. "Do you know what mamma is going to do, Miss Delavigne?"

"No, I do not."

"She is going to cross-question that man about Canada in such a ladylike, inane way that he won't know whether he's on his head or his heels. Come and listen."

"Mrs. Macartney may not like it."

"Yes, she will; the more the merrier. Come along."

Vivienne laughed and followed him near the Irish lady, who was preposterously and outrageously fat. A living tide was slowly rolling over her, obliterating all landmarks of a comely person. Her ankles were effaced; her waist was gone. Her wrists had disappeared, and her neck had sunk into her shoulders. Cheeks and chin were a wide crimson expanse, yet her lazy, handsome blue eyes looked steadily out, in no wise affrighted by the oncoming sea of flesh.

"Mamma always does this," said Patrick glee-

fully. "She doesn't know any more about geography than a tabby cat, and she won't learn till she gets to a place. Look at the little man writhing before her. She has called his dear land Nova Zembla six times. Listen to him."

"Madam," the Nova Scotian was saying, "this is Nova Scotia. Nova Zembla is situated in the Arctic regions. It is a land of icebergs and polar bears. I scarcely think it has any inhabitants."

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Macartney, shaking her portly person with a good-natured laugh. "The names are so much alike that they confuse me. I only know that one is a cold place and the other a warm one, that one is in North America and the other in South."

"Madam," he said desperately, and shifting his feet about on a coil of rope on which he had taken refuge, "Nova Zembla is in the north of Europe. We are in North America."

"Are we?" she said amiably; "then we haven't come to Canada yet?"

"Oh yes, madam, we have. Nova Scotia is in Canada, in the lower southeastern part—nearest England you know. It is the last in the line of provinces that stretch from the Pacific to the Atlantic."

At the mention of the Pacific, Mrs. Macartney's lumbering fancy attempted to take flight to the coral groves of Oceanica. "I did not know that

Canada bordered on the Pacific," she returned dubiously. "How near is it?"

"Just three thousand six hundred and sixty-two miles away, madam. The continent lies between us."

"Oh indeed," with relief; "and Canada you say extends all the way across."

"Yes, madam."

"And it is made up of different provinces?"

"Yes, madam; they have been confederated."

"And this one is called Nova Scotia?"

"Yes, madam."

"And how large may it be?" cajolingly; "half as large as one of our Irish provinces?"

"Madam," trembling with indignation, "Nova Scotia, with the island at its northeastern extremity, has only about ten thousand square miles of area less than all Ireland with every province in it."

"Bless me!" she exclaimed in unmitigated surprise. Then after a long pause, and with less assurance, "The island, I suppose, is Newfoundland?"

"No, madam," dejectedly. "Newfoundland is away to the northeast of us—a two days' voyage from here."

Mrs. Macartney, a trifle abashed, decided to abandon the somewhat dangerous ground of Canada's geographical position, and confine herself to general remarks. She started out gallantly on a new career. "This a fine place to live in, I sup-

pose—plenty of sport. You have hunting and fishing all the year round, don't you?"

Somewhat mollified he assented unqualifiedly to this. Following the law of association, she dragged from some recess in her mind another less pleasing feature of the hunting world in Canada, which she had somewhere and at some time heard mentioned. "Do the Indians cause you very much trouble?" she asked sympathetically.

"No, madam; our aborigines are a very peaceful set."

"How long may it be since your last massacre?"

"I don't quite catch your meaning, madam."

"Don't you have risings and rebellions? I had some cousins living in Halifax when I was a girl—army people they were, and they told me that they used to shoot Indians from their bedroom windows."

At this point the little man gave tokens of a general collapse.

"Perhaps they said bears—I really believe they did," Mrs. Macartney added hastily, by way of restoring his suspended animation; "in fact I am sure they did, and," confusedly, "I think they said the bears came in from the forests after dark, and went about the streets to pick up the scraps thrown from the houses, and it was quite a common thing to see a night-capped head at a window with a gun in its hand——" she stopped delightedly,

for the little man was not only himself again, but was laughing spasmodically.

"Madam," he gasped at length, "our native Indians fought vigorously when this province was a battleground between England and France. Since the founding of this city they have gradually calmed down, till now they are meeker than sheep. We have only a few thousands of them, and they are scattered all over the province, living in camps in the woods, or in small settlements. They never do anybody any harm."

"It does my heart good to hear that," said Mrs. Macartney, with a jovial laugh. "Truth to tell, my scalp has been feeling a trifle loose on my head since we came in sight of this country. And if the Indians don't worry you now," insinuatingly, "I daresay you are able to make quite a civilized town of Halifax."

He stifled a laugh. "We try to, madam."

This answer was too indefinite to suit Mrs. Macartney. A suspicion was gaining ground in her mind that Halifax was not the military camp and collection of log houses that she had thought it to be.

"How many people are there in the town?" she inquired guilelessly.

"About forty thousand, madam."

"In Halifax?" she asked hesitatingly, "or in the whole province?"

"In Halifax, madam. There are over four hundred and forty thousand in the province."

Mrs. Macartney was considerably staggered. "And do you have shops and hotels and churches?"

"All three, madam."

"I had an idea that Canadians sent to England for all the necessaries of life."

"Just turn around, madam," said the Nova Scotian.

Mrs. Macartney had opened her mouth to make another remark, but the words died away on her lips.

Stretching along the western shore a busy, prosperous town presented itself to her gaze. Like all other towns it must be somewhat grimy and dirty in the light of day. At night, with the moon hanging over it and myriad lights flashing from the tiers of buildings rising one above another on the slope of a long hill, it was like a fairy city.

All along the shore were rows of wooden wharves running out into the harbor where there were moored ocean steamers, coasting vessels, fishing boats, ferry steamers, tugboats, and tiny skiffs, some of which darted gayly in and out among the wharves. Some of the ships were brightly lighted, and people could be seen moving about on them.

"Surely, surely," said Mrs. Macartney, turning to her companion in unfeigned amazement, "I have been misformed about Canada. One of its

provinces is larger than Ireland, and its chief town, if you shut your eyes, would make you think that you were looking at Dublin itself. Sure, I feel like the Queen of Sheba," and with a comical twinkle in her eye, she turned around to see who had laid a hand on her arm.

Her son Patrick stood before her. "And I feel like King Solomon," he exclaimed; "so many unruly ladies to take care of. Miss Delavigne won't come below to look after her traps. Mamma, will you come and point out yours to me?"

"Indeed, no, my son," said the lady amiably; "you weren't here just now when I wanted you, and I had to apply to this gentleman," with a bow to the Nova Scotian. "I'm going to see further sights," and she waddled toward a better place of observation.

CHAPTER III

HOME AGAIN

ONE of the long wharves was sprinkled with people watching the "Acadian" come in from the sea. Custom-house officials were there, wharf laborers, sailors, loafers, and at the very end of the wharf was a group of fur-clad individuals who were laughing, joking, stamping their feet, or pacing briskly up and down while waiting to welcome the friends and relatives drawing so near to them.

With them, yet a little apart from them, stood a man who did not move from his place and who seemed indifferent to the extreme cold. He was wrapped in a black fur coat, and a cap of the same material—a fine and costly Persian lamb—was pulled down over his brows.

His pale, cold face was turned toward the "Acadian," and his blue eyes scanned without emotion the people hurrying to and fro on her decks.

When the steamer swung around toward the wharf, he watched the gangways being thrown out and the living tide pouring down them and overflowing in all directions. The air was full of greet-

ings. Mothers and fathers, lovers and friends, were looking into each others' eyes, and embracing one another tenderly. Then the first gush of salutation over their thoughts reverted to business. In a mass the passengers precipitated themselves upon the custom officials and eagerly watched for and identified their luggage as it was rapidly hoisted from the hold of the steamer to the wharf.

The man in the fur coat pressed his way through the throng of people and gained the deck of the steamer. The Macartneys and Vivienne Delavigne stood together.

The girl saw him coming, went to meet him, and putting out her hand said, "How do you do, Mr. Armour?"

Composed as his face usually was she yet caught an almost instantly repressed look of repulsion. Unspeakably chilled by it and the brevity and stiffness of his greeting, yet too proud and philosophical to show the slightest sign of disappointment, she said steadily:

"This is Mrs. Macartney, who has been kind enough to chaperon me across the Atlantic."

Mr. Armour bowed politely, his cap in his hand. Captain Macartney she found to her surprise he already knew, though he spoke to him almost as formally as if they had never met before.

Patrick, after a searching glance at Mr. Armour, turned away muttering, "Iceberg!"

When Mr. Armour in a few brief sentences thanked Mrs. Macartney for her kindness to his ward, she said cheerfully: "She's one of the right sort is Miss Delavigne. She is the only girl I have ever seen that would have satisfied my old grandmother. I was the one that never could please her." Mr. Armour stared slightly at her as if he did not understand what she was saying, then turning to Vivienne he said shortly, "What luggage have you?"

"Four boxes," she replied; "black ones with V. D. on the covers."

"Will you come with me to find them?" he said, and after a brief leavetaking of the Macartneys he preceded her to the gangway.

Vivienne looked regretfully over her shoulders. Mrs. Macartney waved her hand good-naturedly, Captain Macartney smiled and lifted his cap, and Patrick blew a kiss from the tips of his fingers and exclaimed, "*Au revoir, mademoiselle.*"

However they met again. After a time, borne to and fro in the surgings of the crowd, they found themselves in the shed where the luggage had been taken to be examined. Vivienne was a short distance from Mrs. Macartney, who had seated herself on a box that she recognized as her own. Neither Captain Macartney nor Patrick was in sight and she was surveying in huge amusement the scene of civilized confusion so different from the picture of

their arrival that her fancy had conjured up—a few logs thrown out in the water, their descent thereupon, and welcome by swarms of half-clad savages dancing around, their tomahawks in hand.

With an amiable interest in the affairs of every one with whom she came in contact, the Irish lady gazed attentively at a custom-house official near her with whom a Halifax maiden was reasoning, vainly endeavoring to persuade him that there was nothing dutiable in her half a dozen open trunks, which looked suspiciously like containing a wedding trousseau.

Mrs. Macartney at intervals took a hand in the argument, and looking sympathetically at a heap of new kid gloves that the officer had just drawn from some hidden recess, she remarked in a wheedling voice: "What's the good of being under the English flag if one is so particular about bits of things like that. Come now, officer, let them pass. I'm sure the duty on them is a mere trifle."

"Thirty-five per cent," he said, throwing up his head to look at her.

Her thoughts reverted to herself and she exclaimed: "Faith, I'll be ruined! Have I got to pay you that for the privilege of covering my hands in cold weather?"

"Yes'm," he said smartly, "that is if your gloves have not been worn." Then fixing her with his appraising eye, as if he gathered from her comfort-

able appearance that she might be one to indulge in soft raiment and fine linen, he rattled off a list of articles which she would have done well to have left behind her.

"We've got to protect our merchants, madam. If you've brought any description of silk gloves, kid gloves, mitts, silk plush, netting used for manufacture of gloves, we'll assess you. If you've any silk cords, tassel girdles, silk velvets except church vestments——"

"That's a very likely thing for me to have," she interrupted indignantly.

"Silk manufactures," he said, "including gros grains, satins, sarcenet, Persians, poplins, ribbons, shawls, ties, scarfs, bows, handkerchiefs, mantillas, ——" and he gabbled on till his breath failed him.

Mrs. Macartney was speechless for the first time in her life. She turned from him with a shudder, as if to say, you are a dangerous man, and hailed an agile young official who was pursuing a comet-like career over trunks and boxes and leaving a trail of white chalk marks behind him.

At her signal he bore down upon her box with bewildering rapidity, opened it, and with long cunning fingers extracted therefrom every dutiable article. The new gloves still stitched together, the silk and linen and dainty trifles still in the wrappers in which they had come from the Dublin shops, lay in a heap before him.

"Twenty dollars," he ejaculated, and she had with his assistance mechanically abstracted from her purse a sufficient amount of the foreign currency to pay him, and he had given her box the pass mark and was away before she realized the extent of the weakness which she had displayed in not uttering one word of protest.

With a sigh of dismay she turned and met Vivienne's eye. They had had many jokes together and with a simultaneous impulse they began to laugh.

"'Tis a country of surprises, me dear girl," said Mrs. Macartney wagging her head. "Ah, Geoffrey, hear a tale of distress," and looking at Captain Macartney, who suddenly appeared before them, she poured her troubles in his always sympathetic ear.

Vivienne was listening with interest when amid all the bustle and excitement she felt her guardian's cold eye upon her.

"Your boxes are marked," he said; "will you come now?"

With a hasty good-bye to her friends the girl followed him from the building.

A few sleighs and cabs were drawn up in the shadow of a square warehouse that stood at the head of the wharf. Before one of these sleighs Mr. Armour stopped. A coachman in an enormous fur cape and with his head half hidden in a

heavy cap hurried from his seat and went to the horse's head.

Mr. Armour assisted Vivienne into the sleigh, then gathered up the reins in his hands and placed himself beside her. The coachman sprang to the back seat and they passed slowly under a black archway and emerged into long Water Street that follows closely the line of wharves running from one end of the old colonial town to the other.

Once upon the street the horse, a beautiful black creature, impatient from his long time of waiting and feeling lively in the keen frosty air, struck into a quicker pace. Smoothly and swiftly they slipped over the snowy streets, sometimes between rows of lighted shops whose windows sparkled with frost, and sometimes by dwelling houses whose partly closed curtains afforded tantalizing glimpses of light and good cheer within.

The girl's heart beat rapidly. Home—home—the magic word was ringing in her ears. Earnestly peering out from her wraps to observe what changes had taken place during her absence, she scarcely noticed the silence of the man beside her, except when some eager question leaped to her lips and was instantly repressed by an upward glance at his frigid face.

Cold as a statue, dumb as a mummy, he sat. One might have thought him a dead man but for his handling of the whip and reins. He seemed

to be plunged in a profound and painful reverie, and did not once break the silence from the time of their leaving the wharf until their arrival within sight of his own house.

They had passed beyond the city limits and on each side of them stretched wide snowy fields bounded by low stone walls. They were approaching the shores of the Arm, where many of the merchants of the town had erected substantial, comfortable houses for themselves.

When they stopped before a gate and the man jumped out to open it, Mr. Armour pulled himself together with an effort and looked down at Vivienne with a confused, "I beg your pardon."

"I did not speak," she said calmly.

"I thought you did," he replied; then touching his horse with the whip they again set out on their way, this time along a winding road bordered by evergreens.

"It was kind in you to come and meet me," said Vivienne when they drew up before a large, square white house with brilliantly lighted windows.

Mr. Armour murmured some unintelligible reply that convinced her he had not heard what she said.

"What curious behavior," she reflected. "He must be ill."

Mr. Armour was looking at the closed sleigh standing before the door.

"Who is going out to-night?" he asked of the man.

"Mrs. Colonibel and Colonel Armour, sir," said the coachman touching his cap. "There is a ball at Government House."

Mr. Armour turned to Vivienne and extended a helping hand, then drawing a latchkey from his pocket he threw open a large inner door.

Vivienne stepped in—stepped from the bitter cold of a Canadian winter night to the warmth and comfort of tropical weather. The large square hall was full of a reddish light. Heavy curtains, whose prevailing color was red, overhung each doorway. A group of tall palms stood in one corner and against them was placed the tinted statue of a lacrosse player. Pictures of Canadian scenery hung on the walls and over two of the doorways hung the heads and branching antlers of Nova Scotian moose.

Her quiet scrutiny of the hall over she found Mr. Armour was regarding her with a look of agitation on his usually impassive face.

"Will you be kind enough to take off your hat?" he said ; "it shades your face."

The girl looked at him in surprise and removed the large felt hat that she wore. Somewhat to her amusement she discovered a huge mirror mounted on a marble bracket at her elbow. A passing glance at it showed that her smooth black hair was

not dishevelled, but was coiled in the symmetrical rolls imperiously demanded by Dame Fashion as she reigned in Paris. Her face beneath was dark and glowing, her eyes composed as she would have them, and her resemblance to her dead father was extraordinary.

She looked expectantly at Mr. Armour. He bit his lip and without speaking drew aside a velvet *portière* with a hand shaking from some strong and overmastering emotion and signed to her to enter the drawing room.

CHAPTER IV

MAMMY JUNIPER

VIVIENNE advanced a few paces and looked into a luxuriously furnished apartment, whose prevailing glimmer of red caught and held her eye painfully.

Two gentlemen, the one old, the other young, were seated in arm-chairs drawn up on each side of the blazing fire. They were both in evening dress and both held newspapers in their hands. The younger man lifted up his eyes, threw a glance of unmitigated astonishment, first at Mr. Armour then at Vivienne, and rose hurriedly from his seat.

Vivienne scarcely noticed him. Her attention was directed to Colonel Armour, who looked for an instant not the well-preserved man of sixty that he aspired to be, but the much older man that he really was.

He started nervously, his face turned a sickly yellow, and he clutched the arms of his chair as if unable to raise himself. But it was only for a brief space of time. He regained his composure and stood up, towering a whole head above his sons, who were by no means short men. Leaning

one hand heavily on the back of his chair he fixed his eye-glass in place and staring at his elder son said with emphasis: "One of your pleasant surprises, eh, Stanton? Will you introduce me to this young lady?"

The pleading, almost agonized expression with which Mr. Armour had regarded his father died away.

"Do you not know her?" he said in a harsh, sad voice.

"H'm—judging from a faint resemblance" (and here the suspicion of a sneer passed over Colonel Armour's features), "I should say that she might be related to a young man once in my employ."

Vivienne watched the two men with breathless interest. At last she stood face to face with her guardians, and to Colonel Armour, as head of the house, some acknowledgment was due. Therefore when Mr. Armour turned to her with the words, "Allow me to present to you, Miss Delavigne, my father, Colonel Armour, and my brother Valentine," she made them each a pretty salutation and said gracefully that she was rejoiced to have the opportunity of thanking them for their kindness to her through so many years.

Colonel Armour stared at her through his gold-rimmed glass and Mr. Valentine, after making her a profound bow, stood bolt upright and confided to his moustache: "No raw schoolgirl this; a most

self-possessed young person. What will Flora say? Merciful heaven, here she is!"

A portly, golden-headed woman, whose beauty was beginning to wane, stood motionless in the doorway. One hand was clutched in the shining satin folds of her dress, while with the other she held up an ostrich fan, over which her large blue eyes peered wrathfully at the girl's slim, graceful figure.

"Flora!" ejaculated Mr. Armour warningly.

The lady started, dropped her fan to her side, and burst into an hysterical laugh. "How you startled me! I did not know that there was a stranger present. Who is this young lady?"

"You know who she is," said Mr. Armour severely, while Mr. Valentine muttered wickedly, "Ananias and Sapphira."

"It is Miss Delavigne, I suppose," she replied peevishly; "but why did you not let us know that she was coming by this steamer? I was unprepared. How do you do?" and she extended her finger tips to Vivienne. "Did you have a good passage? You must have some tea. I will speak to the servants," and she disappeared.

In a few minutes she returned, a shining, sparkling vision, and quite mistress of herself. "I have spoken to the table maid; she will see that you are attended to. Will you excuse us if we leave you? We have an engagement for this evening, and I have to pick up a friend on the way."

"I should be sorry to keep you," said Vivienne calmly; "and I am tired and would like to go to bed."

"A room is being made ready for you," said Mrs. Colonibel graciously. "I hope that you may sleep well. Come Uncle and Valentine, we are late."

Colonel Armour and Mr. Valentine came from the room, drew on fur topcoats, and with a polite good-night to Mr. Armour and Vivienne left them standing in the hall.

At their departure Mr. Armour fell into a kind of reverie that lasted some minutes. Then he pulled himself together, apologetically ushered Vivienne into the dining room, and bowed himself away.

Vivienne sat at the table drinking tea and eating bread and butter and wondering languidly what Mrs. Colonibel had said to the fat maid-servant, who was waiting on her in great curiosity and some slight disrespect.

"I have finished," she said at length, fixing her large, dark eyes on the woman who was trotting aimlessly between the table and the sideboard. "Will you show me to my room?"

"Yes, miss," said the woman shortly, and gathering together Vivienne's wraps she conducted her up a broad, easy staircase to a second square hall, also luxuriously furnished and having a circular opening which looked down on the one below it.

"The pink room's been got ready for you, miss," said the woman, throwing open the door of a chamber blazing with rose color.

Vivienne half shut her dazzled eyes and walked into it.

"The coachman's going to bring up your boxes when he comes from the stable," said the maid. "Can I do anything for you?"

"No, thank you," said Vivienne; "you may bring me some hot water in the morning."

"It's here," said the woman briefly, and walking behind a screen she pointed to a basin with shining faucets.

"That is nice, to have hot water pipes in one's room," said Vivienne.

"It's all over the house," said the woman, and after hanging Vivienne's cloak in a closet she withdrew.

The girl walked to the window and looked out at the snow-laden trees. "It seems I wasn't expected," she murmured sadly. "It seems to me I'm lonely," she continued, and putting up her hands to her eyes she tried to check the tears falling from them.

A few hours later she was sleeping a light, unhappy sleep in her huge pink bed, her mother's portrait pressed to her breast. Suddenly the portrait seemed to turn to a tombstone, that was crushing her to death.

She awoke, gasping for breath, and lifting her heavy eyelids saw that some one was standing over her and that a heavy hand was laid on her breast. She pushed the hand aside and sat up.

Such an ugly, grotesque figure of a black woman as stood over her; her face like midnight, her features large and protruding, a white nightcap perched on the top of her grizzled tufts of hair, bunches of white cotton wool sticking out of her ears, a padded dressing-gown enveloping her shaky limbs, her trembling fingers shading her candle.

"You are dropping wax on my bed," said the girl coolly.

The old woman's face contracted with rage, and drawing back she looked as if she were about to hurl her brass candlestick at the occupant of the bed.

"You cannot frighten me," said Vivienne proudly; "do not try it."

The black woman burst into a series of revilings and imprecations mixed with references to fire and brimstone, coffins, murderers, fiery chariots, and burning in torment, to which Vivienne listened with curled lip.

"You are a capital hater, Mammy Jupiter," she said ironically, "and I suppose the vials of your wrath have been filling up all these years. But I really wish you would not disturb me in the middle of the night."

The colored woman glared at her. Then depositing her candlestick on the floor she knelt on a small rug and began to sway and groan, bending herself almost double in her paroxysm of wrath.

"Poor soul," said Vivienne, turning her head aside, "her attention has wandered from me. I suppose it is a shock to her to find the daughter of Étienne Delavigne in one of the beds of the sacred house of Armour. But I must be firm."

Mammy Juniper was apostrophizing some absent person under the name of Ephraim. In spite of the coldness of the room where Vivienne had thrown open the window, the perspiration streamed down her face. In a fierce, low voice and with a wildly swaying body she chanted dismally, "O Ephraim, thou art oppressed and broken in judgment. Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin altars shall be unto him to sin. Thy glory shall fly away like a bird. Ephraim shall receive shame —shall receive shame."

"I wonder who Ephraim is?" murmured Vivienne.

Mammy Juniper was wringing her hands with an appearance of the greatest agony. "Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left. Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer—to the murderer! oh, my God!" Her voice sank to a husky whisper. She fell forward and pressed for

an instant the knotted veins of her throbbing forehead to the cold floor.

Then she sprang to her feet, and extending her clasped hands and in a voice rising to the tones of passionate entreaty exclaimed, "Take with you words and turn to the Lord. He shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots like as Lebanon; his beauty shall be as the olive tree. Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols?'"

"Mammy Juniper," said Vivienne, "this is enough. If you want to recite any more passages from the Bible go to your own room."

The old woman paid no attention to her.

"Go!" said Vivienne, springing from the bed and pointing to the candlestick.

Mammy Juniper mowed horribly at her, yet like a person fascinated by a hated object, she stretched out her hand, took the light, and began to retreat backward from the room.

Vivienne gazed steadily at her. "See, I shall not lock my door," she said nonchalantly, "and I shall be asleep in ten minutes; but don't you come back again. Do you hear?"

The old woman made an inarticulate sound of rage.

"You understand me," said Vivienne. "Now go to bed," and waving the disturber of her peace over the threshold she noiselessly closed the door.

CHAPTER V

A CONVERSATION WITH JUDY

ALL of Vivienne's unhappiness passed away with her night's sleep. On waking up to the bright, still beauty of a clear December morning her naturally high spirits rose again.

"The Armours have really little power to afflict me," she said, getting out of bed with a gay laugh. "My attachment to them is altogether a thing of duty, not affection. If they do not care for me I will leave them. That is a simple matter," and going to the window she drew in a long breath of the fresh morning air and noted with delight the blueness of the sky, the whiteness of the snow, and the darkness of the sombre evergreens before the house, where a number of solemn crows sat cawing harshly as if asking for some breakfast.

"Ah, it is cold," she exclaimed, drawing her gown about her, "and I am late. I must hurry."

When she at last left her room the breakfast bell had long since rung. She speedily made her way down the staircase, glancing critically through open doors as she passed them.

"The furnishings are too gorgeous, too tropical,"

she murmured; "and flaming colors are everywhere. Evidently the person who furnished this house had a barbaric fondness for bright shades."

On arriving in the lower hall she paused before the dining-room door. She could hear the tinkling of china and murmur of voices within. Then with a composure not assumed but real she drew aside the curtain and entered the room.

Mrs. Colonibel, handsome and imposing in a bright blue morning gown, sat behind the silver coffee urn at the head of the table. She knew that Vivienne had entered yet she took up a cream jug and gazed as steadfastly into its depths as though she expected to find a treasure there.

The corners of Vivienne's lips drooped mischievously. "For all exquisite torture to which one can be subjected," she reflected, "commend me to that inflicted on woman number two who enters the house of woman number one who does not want her."

Beside Mrs. Colonibel sat her daughter—a small misshapen girl, with peering black eyes and elfish locks that straggled down each side of her little wizened face and that she kept tossing back in a vain endeavor to make them hide the lump on her deformed back.

"What a contrast," thought Vivienne with a shudder, "between that poor child and her blonde prosperous-looking mother."

Colonel Armour, tall and stately, but looking not quite so young as he had in the lamplight of the night before, sat—as if in compensation for not occupying the seat at the foot of the table—on Mrs. Colonibel's right hand. Holding himself bolt upright and stirring his coffee gently, he was addressing some suave and gracious remarks to the table in general.

Stanton Armour, who sat opposite Mrs. Colonibel, made no pretense of listening to him. Plunged in deep reflection he seemed to be eating and drinking whatever came to hand.

Valentine, gay and careless, alternately listened to his father and tried to balance a piece of toast on the edge of a fork.

"A happy family party," murmured Vivienne; "what a pity to disturb it!"

The table maid, who was slipping noiselessly around the room, saw her but said nothing. Mr. Valentine raising his eyes caught the maid's curious glances and turned around. Then he hurriedly got up.

"Good-morning. Flora, where is Miss Delavigne to sit?"

In some confusion she ejaculated: "I do not know; Jane bring another chair."

"Is there no place for Miss Delavigne?" said Mr. Armour in cold displeasure. "Put the things beside me," and he turned to the maid, who with

the greatest alacrity was bringing from the cupboard plates, knives, and forks, enough for two or three people.

"What may I give you?" he went on when Vivienne was seated. "Porridge? We all eat that. No, not any? Shall I give you some steak? Flora, Miss Delavigne will have some coffee."

Vivienne sat calmly—Mr. Armour on one side of her, his father on the other—taking her breakfast almost in silence. A few remarks were addressed to her—they evidently did not wish her to feel slighted—to which she replied sweetly, but with so much brevity that no one was encouraged to keep up a conversation with her.

There was apparently nothing in the well-bred composure of the people about her to suggest antipathy, yet her sensitiveness on being thrown into a hostile atmosphere was such that she could credit each one with just the degree of enmity that was felt toward her.

After all, what did it matter? She would soon be away; and her dark face flushed and her eyes shone, till the surreptitious observation of her that all the other people at the table—except Mr. Armour—had been carrying on bade fair to become open and unguarded.

Mrs. Colonibel's heart stirred with rage and uneasiness within her. She hated the girl for her youth and distinction, and with bitter jealousy she

noted her daughter's admiring glances in Vivienne's direction.

"Judy," she said, when breakfast was over and the different members of the family were separating, "will you do something for me in my room?"

"No, mamma," said the girl coolly, and taking up the crutch beside her chair she limped to Vivienne's side. "Are you going to unpack your boxes, Miss Delavigne?"

"Yes, I am."

"May I go with you? I love to see pretty things."

"Certainly," murmured Vivienne; and suiting her pace to that of the lame girl she went upstairs beside her.

"Bah," said Judy, halting at the door of the pink room, "they have put you in this atrocious rose-bed."

"Pink is a charming color," said Vivienne.

"Yes, in moderation. Come upstairs and see my rooms," and she slowly ascended another staircase.

Vivienne followed her to the story above, and through a third square hall to a long narrow apartment running the whole length of the northern side of the house.

Judy threw open the door. "Here," she said, with a flourish of her hand, "having everything

against me, I yet managed to arrange a sitting room where one is not in danger of being struck blind by some audacious blue or purple or red. What do you think of it?"

Vivienne glanced about the exquisitely furnished room. "It is charming."

"Come in," said Judy, hospitably pulling up a little white chair before the blazing fire. "We'll have a talk."

"Do you know," she went on, seating herself beside Vivienne, "this used to be a lumber room? I got Stanton to come up one day and look at it—he is as artistic in his tastes as mamma is inartistic—and he suggested all this. We cleared out the old furniture and put in those yellow panes of glass to simulate sunshine, and got this satin paper because it would light up well, and he had the white and gold furniture made for me. The cream rugs were a present from Uncle Colonel. Here is my bedroom," and she hobbled to a door at the western end of the room and threw it open for a full view of the room beyond.

"What a dainty place!" said Vivienne.

"An idea strikes me," exclaimed Judy, hurrying to the other end of the apartment. "Look here," and she opened a second door.

Vivienne surveyed a small empty room.

"Wouldn't you like this for a bedroom?" said Judy excitedly. "We can share this big room in

common. You can read and work here, for I am sure you and I would pull well together, and like me you will just hate sitting downstairs all the time."

Vivienne smiled at her. "I should disturb you —and besides I have been put in the room below."

"You needn't mind leaving it," said Judy. "Mamma will be delighted to get you out of it; it is one of the guest rooms."

"Oh, in that case," said Vivienne, "I will accept your invitation. You will speak to Mrs. Colonibel?"

"I will go now," said Judy, hurrying from the room. Vivienne sat down by the fire and dropped her head upon her hands. "I am not likely to be here long," she said, "so it doesn't matter."

"Mamma is delighted," she heard presently in a shrill voice. "I knew she would be. There is some furniture that can be put in the room, and when the servants finish their work below they will come up and arrange it. What fun we shall have——"

Vivienne looked kindly at the little cynical face.

"'Till our first row," said Judy, letting her crutch slip to the floor. "I suppose I shall hate you as I do every other body who has a straight back."

Vivienne did not reply to her, and she went on peering restlessly into her face. "Well, what do you think of us?"

"This is not my first acquaintance with the Armours," said Vivienne evasively.

"Ah, you were once here as a little child; but you don't remember much about them, do you?"

"I remember Mammy Juniper," said Vivienne, with a laugh, "and that she hated me and my father's memory. I see that she still keeps up her old-womanish habit of prowling about the house at night."

"Yes," said Judy peevishly; "and if we forget to lock our doors we find her praying over us at unearthly hours."

"She has been a faithful servant to the family, hasn't she?" said Vivienne.

"And she has a diabolical temper," said Judy.

"Don't you think that she is crazy?"

"A little perhaps, though I think that she pretends to be more so to cover her inconsistencies. She belongs to the Armours, body and soul, and prides herself on being a model Christian. I say the two things don't go together. The Armours haven't been famed for devotion to the cause of religion for some years."

"She talks about Ephraim," said Vivienne; "who is he?"

"Ephraim is Uncle Colonel," said Judy, with a chuckle. "Did she mention his having made a covenant with the Egyptians?"

"No."

"He has; and the Assyrians are the people of Halifax. If you can get her started on that you'll be entertained," and Judy began a low, intensely amused laugh, which waxed louder till Vivienne at last joined her in it.

"It's too funny," said Judy, wiping the tears from her eyes. "I can even make Stanton laugh telling him about it, and he's about the glummest man I know."

"Is he always as, as——"

"As hateful?" suggested Judy cheerfully.

"As reserved," went on Vivienne, "as he is now?"

"Always for the last few years. He gets too much of his own way and he worries over things. I asked him the other day if he had committed a murder. My, how he glowered at me! He's the worst-tempered man I know."

"He looks as if he had plenty of self-control," said Vivienne.

"Wait till you see him in one of his rages—not a black one, but a white, silent Armour rage. He's master absolute here, and if any one opposes him—well, it's a bad thing for the family. You know, I suppose, that he has pushed Uncle Colonel out of the business?"

"Has he?" said Vivienne. "I didn't know it."

"Didn't he write you while you were away?"

"Business letters only," said the girl, "and they

were always written by Mr. Stanton, even when I first went."

"Well, Uncle Colonel is out," said Judy. "Stanton won't even let him live in the house."

"Why he was here last evening and this morning."

"Oh yes, he gets his meals here. He and Val live down in the cottage; look, down there among the trees," and she pointed to the gabled roof of a handsome colonial building some distance below the house.

Vivienne got up and went to the window.

"It's a great surprise to us all to have you come home so unexpectedly," said Judy; "to mamma, especially, though she has always dreaded it. Did you know you were coming?"

"No," said Vivienne, in a low voice.

"I thought that you were to be kept abroad now that you have grown up. I don't know why Stanton brought you back. Does he mean to keep you here?"

"I do not know."

"It would be a great deal pleasanter for you to live abroad," said Judy, "and for us too. Your coming is sure to revive unpleasant memories."

Vivienne turned around swiftly. "What do you mean by unpleasant memories?"

Judy stared at her. "Don't you know all about yourself—about your father?"

"I know that my father was obliged to work for his living," said Vivienne proudly, "and that he served Colonel Armour long and faithfully. I see nothing unpleasant about that."

"No, that is not unpleasant," said Judy. "But on your word of honor, do you know nothing more?"

"I am at a loss to understand your meaning," said Vivienne coldly.

"And you will continue at a loss," replied her new friend doggedly, "for I shall tell you nothing further. I am usually fond of gossip; now I shall hold my tongue."

Vivienne looked into the little, shrewd, not unkindly face and smiled. "You are an odd girl. How old are you?"

"Sixteen when I'm not sixty," said the younger girl wearily. "I hate to live and I hate to die; and I hate everything and everybody."

"Why do you talk like that?" asked Vivienne caressingly.

"Suppose instead of being straight and tall and distinguished-looking, you were an ugly little toad like me—how would you talk?"

"You have beautiful eyes," said Vivienne, touching Judy's cheek softly with her fingers.

"Don't you pity me," said Judy threateningly. "Don't you pity me or I shall cry," and slipping on her knees beside Vivienne she burst into tears.

CHAPTER VI

MRS. COLONIBEL LOSES HER TEMPER

EARLY in the afternoon Vivienne was on her knees before her boxes when a housemaid knocked at her door and announced to her that there was a "person" downstairs who wished to see her.

Quickly descending the staircase she found Mrs. Macartney looking longingly at those chairs in the hall that were most comfortably upholstered. As soon as she caught sight of Vivienne she sank into a Turkish arm-chair that was all cushions and padding.

"I'm glad to see you, me child," she said in a hearty, boisterous way. "Sure"—with a mischievous twinkle in her eye—"your friends must be a disreputable set, for when I mentioned your name the domestic looked as if she'd like to shut the door in me face, and there's another watching me from behind those curtains, so I thought to myself I'll not sit down, for fear of complications, till me dear girl arrives."

Vivienne suppressed a smile as she glanced over the somewhat fantastic attire with which Mrs.

Macartney bade defiance to the Canadian cold and said, "Will you come into the drawing room?"

"Yes, me dear," said Mrs. Macartney amiably, getting up and waddling across the hall, "if you'll kindly keep an eye on me and see that I don't put any of the bric-a-brac in my pocket. And how do you find yourself after the voyage? Could you help me out of this jacket, me dear? I'm hot with the cold. Just like bakers' ovens are the houses here, and if I had a fan I'd be grateful indeed."

Vivienne got her a fan, then they entered upon a a long, cozy chat, which consisted largely, to Vivienne's amusement, of Mrs. Macartney's impressions of Halifax.

"Such a dirty town, me dear. Troth, your houses are brown and your streets are brown, and I'd like to get at them with soap and water; and such tinder boxes of houses—wood, wood—you'll all burn up some day if the few brick and stone ones aren't the salvation of ye; and your lovely surroundings, me dear; the drives and the views, they're magnificent, just howling with beauty—but what is this?" in a tragic tone and staring open-mouthed before her.

There was the rustle of a silk gown, and looking up Vivienne saw Mrs. Colonibel standing before them, and remembered that she had heard her say that it was her day at home.

Her face was pale and her manner plainly said,

"How dare you invite a guest of yours into the sacred precincts of my drawing room?" Then sweeping her long train after her she passed on.

The drawing room was a long apartment having an archway in the middle, from which hung heavy velvet curtains, that however did not keep from Vivienne's ears and those of her guest, the impatient rustling of Mrs. Colonibel's gown as she fidgeted to and fro.

Vivienne was deeply annoyed, yet Mrs. Macartney's face was so ludicrous that she had difficulty in concealing a smile as she murmured: "Would you feel more comfortable in another room?"

"Faith, no, me dear; sit it out. You've as good right to be here as she has. Just hear her now; she isn't mad, is she?" This last remark was in a stage whisper, which, judging from subsequent jerkings and sweepings to and fro, was perfectly audible to the occupant of the other part of the room.

"No, no," said Vivienne hurriedly; and she plunged into a series of questions where Mrs. Macartney quite lost breath in trying to follow her.

The girl congratulated herself upon the fact that the Irish woman was as good natured as she was happy-go-lucky. An incident that would have sent another woman flying from the house shortened her stay not at all. She lingered on chatting enjoyably about Captain Macartney, who was en-

gaged in some military duties, and Patrick, who was heartbroken because he had an appointment to keep which made it impossible for him to call upon mademoiselle that day, throwing meanwhile curious glances at the curtain which divided them from Mrs. Colonibel.

For nearly two hours Mrs. Colonibel had a succession of visitors. Their voices were distinctly audible to the two people sitting in the front part of the room, and they could plainly hear a great deal of the cheerful afternoon gossip and the occasional tinkling of teacups.

About five o'clock, interesting as was her conversation with Vivienne, Mrs. Macartney began to show signs of weariness. Her nostrils dilated slowly as if she were inhaling the fragrance of her favorite Bohea, and her countenance said plainly, "I smell hot cakes."

"What shall I do?" thought Vivienne; "hospitality says, Get a cup of tea for your guest. Prudence says, You had better not try, lest you fail. However, I will; she shall have some if I make it myself," and excusing herself, she got up and quietly went out through the hall to the back drawing room.

Mrs. Colonibel sat a little removed from the fire beside a tiny, prettily equipped tea-table. Two ladies only, Vivienne was thankful to see, were in the room—genuine Canadian women, looking rosy and

comfortable in their winter furs. Vivienne went up to the table and stood in quiet gracefulness. "Mrs. Colonibel, will you give me a cup of tea?"

"Yes, indeed," said the lady, with alacrity; "won't you have some cake too?"

"Thank you," murmured Vivienne, and with a quiet bow she proceeded carefully through the hall.

"What a charming girl," she heard one of the ladies exclaim; "is she staying with you?"

"Yes," returned Mrs. Colonibel; "she is a poor young girl whom Mr. Armour has educated. She won't be here long, I fancy. For various reasons we are obliged to keep her in the background."

Vivienne stopped for an instant. "For various reasons," she repeated angrily. Then with an effort she became calm and went on to be saluted by Mrs. Macartney with the remark that she was a jewel.

Vivienne watched the Irish lady gratefully drinking her tea, then she helped her on with her wraps and saw her depart.

Mrs. Colonibel had yet to have her brush with Vivienne, and the opportunity came at the dinner table. She seized the moment when the three men were engaged in a political discussion, and leaning over, said in a low voice: "Who was that fat, vulgar looking woman that was calling on you this afternoon?"

Vivienne held up her head and looked her well

in the eyes. "Oh, you mean the lady for whom I got the tea; Mrs. Macartney is her name."

"Mrs. Macartney—where did you meet her?"

"In Paris."

"She is Irish, I judge by her brogue."

"Oh yes," said Vivienne mischievously; "one would know by her tongue that she is Irish, just as one would know by yours that you are Canadian."

Mrs. Colonibel cast down her eyes. Vivienne had noticed her affected manner of speech, and realized that she shared in the ambition of many of her women friends in Halifax who strove to catch the accent of the English within their gates in order that they too might be taken for English people rather than Canadians.

Presently she went on with a slight sneer. "Mrs. Macartney—an Irish woman—no relation I suppose to Captain Macartney, of the Ninetieth, who was stationed here five years ago?"

"She is his stepmother."

"His stepmother!" and Mrs. Colonibel raised her voice to such a pitch that Colonel Armour and his sons broke off their discussion, and Judy exclaimed in peevish surprise, "What is the matter with you, mamma?"

Mrs. Colonibel paid no attention to any of them but Vivienne. "His stepmother, did you say?" she repeated, fixing the girl with angry eyes.

"I did," replied Vivienne calmly.

"Why did you not tell me so? how is it that you—You did it on purpose!"

Mrs. Colonibel was in a temper. Sitting at the head of her own table, apparently at peace with herself and all mankind, she had flown into a fit of wrath about something which no one in the least understood.

Vivienne disdained to reply to her.

Mrs. Colonibel half rose from the table, her face crimson, her whole frame shaking. "Stanton," she cried, "she"—pointing a trembling finger at Vivienne—"has deliberately insulted me in your house; I will not endure it," and bursting into a flood of tears she hurried from the room.

An extremely awkward silence followed Mrs. Colonibel's departure, which was broken at last by a laugh from Judy.

"Don't be shocked, Miss Delavigne," she said; "mamma has been known to do that before. She is tired I think. What is the trouble, anyway? Fortunately the servants have left the room. Pass me the nuts, Val."

Vivienne's black eyes were resting on her plate, and she did not speak until she found that every one at the table was waiting for her answer.

"Mrs. Macartney called on me to-day," she said, addressing Mr. Armour. "I sat with her in the front drawing room. Mrs. Colonibel passed us,

but so quickly that I did not introduce her. Later on she gave me a cup of tea for Mrs. Macartney. That is all," and Vivienne half shrugged her shoulders and closed her lips.

"Macartney, did you say?" exclaimed Mr. Valentine. "Not Geoffrey Macartney's mother?"

"Yes."

"What a joke!" said the young man. "Macartney used to be a frequent visitor here. Indeed, he once spent two months with us when he broke his leg while tobogganing down our slide with Mrs. Colonibel. She was a great friend of his in those days—a great friend. Naturally she would have liked to meet his mother. Did not Mrs. Macartney mention all this to you?"

"She does not know it," said Vivienne; "of that I am sure. Captain Macartney is a reticent man. By the way," she went on vivaciously, "you saw Captain Macartney on the steamer last evening, Mr. Armour; why did you not tell Mrs. Colonibel that his mother had chaperoned me?"

Mr. Valentine burst into low, rippling, and intensely amused laughter. "Ha, ha! old man, there is one for you. We shall see that you are the one to be blamed."

"I never thought of it," said Mr. Armour heavily, and with the ghost of a smile.

"You might have told us," went on Mr. Valentine complainingly. "You know we all liked Ma-

cartney. I thought he was in India. Poor Flora! It's a lucky thing for you, Miss Delavigne, that you kept that bit of information till she got out of the room. What is he doing here?"

"He has exchanged into another regiment," said Vivienne. "His young brother is with him too."

"Indeed, we must call; and now cannot we leave the table? I want to go to town."

CHAPTER VII

IN DR. CAMPERDOWN'S OFFICE

THE principal hotels of the town of Halifax are situated on Hollis Street, and Hollis Street is next Water Street, and Water Street is next the harbor.

On a dull, windless morning, when the snow clouds hung low in the air, Captain Macartney, encased in a dark uniform and looking exceedingly trim and soldierlike, stepped out of one of these hotels, where he had been to see his stepmother and brother, and walking slowly along the street looked up at the high buildings on each side of him, attentively scrutinizing doorplates and signs as he did so.

There at last was the name he wanted, on the door of a large building that looked rusty and shabby between its smart brick and stone neighbors—Dr. Camperdown, Surgeon. He repeated the words with a satisfied air, then making his way up a dark staircase, pushed open a door that had the polite invitation "Walk in" on it in staring letters. He found himself in a large, bare room, with a row of chairs set about its walls. Unfortu-

nately for him, he was not the first on the field. Six of the chairs were occupied. Three old women, two young ones, and an old man, all poorly dressed and looking in their shabby clothes only half protected from the cold, eyed with small approval the smartly dressed officer who might prove to be a first claimant of the doctor's attention. To their joy he took a seat at the back of the room, thereby giving notice that he was prepared to wait his turn.

They all looked up when the door of an inner apartment was opened. An ugly, sandy head appeared, and a sharp "Next" was flung into the room. One of the old women meekly prepared to enter, stripping off some outer wrap which she dropped on the chair behind her.

"Take your cloud with you," said one of the younger women kindly; "he'll let you out by another door into the hall."

After what seemed to Captain Macartney an unconscionably long time, the door was again opened, and another "Next" was ejaculated. His jaws ached with efforts to suppress his yawns. He longed in vain for a paper.

Finally, after long, weary waiting and much internal grumbling, all his fellow-sufferers had one by one disappeared, and he had the room to himself. The last to go, the old man, stayed in the inner office a longer time than all the others combined,

and Captain Macartney, fretting and chafing with impatience, sprang to his feet, and walking up and down the room, stared at everything in it, singly and collectively. He found out how many chairs were there. He counted the cobwebs, big and little, high up in the corners. He discovered that one leg of the largest press was gone, and that a block of wood had been stuck in its place, thereby rendering it exceedingly shaky and unsteady. He speculated on the number of weeks that had elapsed since the windows had been washed. He wondered why they should be so dirty and the floor so clean, when suddenly, to his immense relief, the door opened and Dr. Camperdown stood before him.

His hair was shaggy and unkempt, his sharp gray eyes, hiding under the huge eyebrows, were fixed piercingly on the military figure which he came slowly toward, the more closely to examine. His long arms, almost as long as those of the redoubtable Rob Roy—who, Sir Walter Scott tells us, could, without stooping, tie the garters of his Highland hose placed two inches below the knee—were pressed against his sides, and his hands were rammed down into the pockets of an old coffee-colored, office coat, on which a solitary button lingered.

"Macartney, is it you," he said doubtfully, "or your double?"

"Myself," said the officer with a smile and extending his hand.

"Come in, come in," said Dr. Camperdown, passing into the other room. "Sit down," dragging forward a leather chair on which the dust lay half an inch thick. "Afraid of the dust? Finicky as ever. Wait, I'll clean it for you—where's my handkerchief? Gave it to that old woman. Stop a bit—here's a towel. Now for a talk." Sprawled out across two chairs, and biting and gnawing at his moustache as if he would uproot it, he gazed with interest at his visitor. "What are you doing in Halifax? Are you in the new regiment?"

"Yes; I arrived three days ago in the 'Acadian.'"

"Same hot-headed Irishman as ever?"

"No; I have cooled considerably since the old subaltern days. India and fevers and accidents have taken the life out of me. How are you getting on? You have a number of charity patients I see."

"Oh Lord, yes; the leeches!"

"Why don't you shake them off?"

Camperdown grunted disapprovingly.

"You encourage them, I fancy," said the officer in his smooth, polished tones. "They would not come if you did not do so. I hope you have others, rich ones, to counterbalance them."

"Yes," gruffly, "I have."

"And you bleed them to make up for the losses you sustain through penniless patients. Ha, ha, Camperdown," and Captain Macartney laughed the pleasant, mellifluous laugh of a man of culture and fashion.

Camperdown looked benevolently at him. "Never mind me. Talk about yourself. What are you making of your life? You're getting older. Have you married?"

"No, but I am thinking of it," gravely and with the faintest shade of conceit. "My stepmother urges me to it, and the advice is agreeable, for I have fallen in love."

"Does she reciprocate?" and Dr. Camperdown bit his moustache more savagely than ever in order to restrain a smile.

"Not entirely; but—you remember the time I broke my leg, Camperdown, five years ago?"

"Yes, a compound fracture."

"The time," scornfully, "that I was fool enough to let Flora Colonibel twist me 'round her little finger."

"Exactly."

"I was taken to the Armours' house you remember, and was fussed over and petted till I loathed the sight of her."

"Yes," dryly, "as much as you had previously admired it."

"By Jove, yes," said the other with a note of

lazy contempt in his voice; "and but for that broken leg, Flora Colonibel would have been Flora Macartney now."

"Very likely," said Camperdown grimly; "but what are you harking back to that old story for?"

"It is an odd thing," went on Captain Macartney with some show of warmth, "that, tame cat as I became out at Pinewood, and bored to death as I was with confidences and family secrets, from the old colonial days down, that one thing only was never revealed to me."

"What was that?"

"The fact that the family possessed a kind of ward or adopted daughter, who was being educated abroad."

"So—they did not tell you that?"

"Not a syllable of it," and Captain Macartney eyed keenly the uncommunicative face before him.

"Why should they have told you?" said Dr. Camperdown.

"Why—why," echoed his visitor in some confusion, his face growing furiously red, "for the very good reason that that is the girl with whom I have chosen to fall in love."

Camperdown shrugged his huge shoulders. "How did they know you'd fall in love with the daughter of their poor devil of a bookkeeper?"

Captain Macartney half rose from his seat. "Camperdown," he said haughtily, "in the old

days we were friends; you and your father before you were deep in the secrets of the house of Armour. I come to you for information which I am not willing to seek at the club or in the hotels. Who is Miss Vivienne Delavigne?"

"Sit down, sit down," said Camperdown surlily and impatiently. "Scratch a Russian and you'll find a Tartar, and scratch an Irishman and you'll find a fire-eater, and every sensible man is a fool when he falls in love. What do you want to know?"

"Everything."

"You love the girl—isn't that everything?"

"No."

"You didn't propose to her?"

"No."

"Did you ask her about her family?"

"I did not," loftily.

"You wish to know what her station in life is, and whether she can with propriety be taken into the aristocratic family of the Macartneys?"

"Yes," shortly; "if you will be so kind as to tell me."

"Here's the matter in a nutshell then. Her father was French, mother ditto, grandfathers and grandmothers the same—all poorest of the poor, and tillers of the soil. Her father got out of the peasant ring, became confidential man for Colonel Armour, and when he reached years of discretion, which was before I did, I believe that he embezzled

largely, burnt the Armours' warehouse, and not being arrested, decamped—the whole thing to the tune of some thousands of dollars. That is her father's record."

Captain Macartney was visibly disturbed. "How long ago did this take place?"

"Twenty years."

"Is it well known—much talked of?"

"No, you know how things are dropped in a town. The story's known, but no one speaks of it. Now the girl has come back, I suppose Dame Rumor will set it flying again."

Captain Macartney relapsed into a chagrined silence. Camperdown sucking in both his cheeks till he was a marvel of ugliness, watched him sharply, and with wicked enjoyment. "You'll have to give her up, Macartney."

"By Jove, I will," said the officer angrily. "My uncle would cut me off with a ha'penny."

"Bah!" said his companion contemptuously. "I would not give her up for all the uncles in Christendom."

"You know nothing about the duty of renunciation," said the other sarcastically. "I've not drunk a glass of wine for a twelve-month."

"What's wrong?" said the physician with professional curiosity.

"Indigestion," shortly. Then slowly, "Suppose I married the girl—she could not live on air."

"Your pay."

"Is not enough for myself."

"You hoped to find her a rich girl," said Dr. Camperdown sharply.

"I will not deny that I had some such expectation," said the other raising his head, and looking at him coolly, but with honest eyes. "Her dress and appearance—her whole *entourage* is that of a person occupying a higher station in life than she does."

"Fiddle-de-dee, what does it matter? She's a lady. What do you care about her ancestors?"

"We don't look upon things on the other side of the Atlantic as you do here," said Captain Macartney half regretfully. "And it is not that alone. It is the disgrace connected with her name that makes the thing impossible."

"Bosh—give her an honest name. You're not half a man, Macartney."

The officer sprang from his seat. His Irish blood was "up." Camperdown chuckled wickedly to himself as he watched him pacing up and down the narrow apartment, holding up his sword with one hand and clasping the other firmly behind his back. From time to time he threw a wrathful glance in the surgeon's direction and after he had succeeded in controlling himself, he said doggedly: "I shall not marry her, but I will do what I can for her; she ought to be got out of that house."

"Why?" said his friend inanely.

"Beg pardon, Camperdown, but your questions infuriate me," said his companion in a low voice. "You know that is no place for a young, innocent girl to be happy. Begin with the head of the house, Colonel Armour. I'll sketch his career for you in six words; young devil, middle-aged devil, old devil. Flora Colonibel is a painted peacock. Stanton an iceberg. Judy an elf, imp, tigress, anything you will. Valentine a brainless fop. If you're a man, you'll help me get her out of it."

"*You* can't do anything now," said Dr. Camperdown pointedly.

"Yes I can—I'm her friend."

"You're her lover, as long as you dangle about her."

"Stuff and nonsense," said Captain Macartney peevishly and resuming his seat. "She isn't in love with me."

Dr. Camperdown burst into a roar of laughter. "She doesn't smile upon you; then why all this agony?"

"It's easily seen that you've not proposed to many women," said Captain Macartney coolly. "They never say yes, at first."

The shaft went home. His ugly *vis-à-vis* shrugged his shoulders and made no reply.

"We had a saying about Flora Colonibel in the past," said Captain Macartney earnestly, "that she

feared neither saint, angel, nor demon, but that she stood in mortal dread of Brian Camperdown. She will persecute that girl to a dead certainty. Can't you hold her in check? My stepmother will stand by you. She would even take her for a trip somewhere, or have her visit her."

"I'll look after her," briefly. "By the way, where did you meet her?"

"In Paris, with the French lady who has been traveling with her since she left school, and who asked my stepmother to take charge of her on the journey here."

"Her arrival was a surprise," said Dr. Camperdown. "Armour didn't tell me that she was coming."

Captain Macartney surveyed him with some jealousy. "So you too have an eye to her movements?"

"Yes," said Camperdown impishly. "I don't care for her antecedents."

"Oh, indeed; I am glad that you do not," said the officer, drawing on his gloves with a smile. "Of course you do not. You have no right to do so. How is that lady with the charming name?"

"She is well."

"Is she still in her old quarters?"

"Yes."

"I must do myself the pleasure of calling on her. She is as remarkable as ever I suppose?"

"More so."

"I can well believe it. Now I must leave you. I am due at the South Barracks at twelve," and he rose to go.

"Stop, Macartney; there are mitigating circumstances connected with this affair. I told you that Miss Delavigne's immediate ancestry was poor. It is also noble on her mother's side—formerly rich. You have heard of the French family the Lacy d'Entrevilles?"

"I have."

"Ever hear that they sprang from the stock of a prince royal of France?"

"No, I have not."

"They say they did; one of them, a Marquis Réné Théodore something or other was a colonel in Louis the Fourteenth's body-guards—came out to Quebec in command of a regiment there, then to Acadie and founded this branch of the family; it is too long a story to tell. I dare say mademoiselle is as proud as the rest of them."

"She is," said his hearer with a short laugh.

"Born aristocrats—and years of noses to the grindstone can't take it out of them, and the Delavignes, though hewers of wood and drawers of water, as compared with the aristocratic Lacy d'Entrevilles, were all high strung and full of honesty. Seriously, Macartney, I think her father was a monomaniac. A quiet man immersed in his

business wouldn't start out all at once on a career of dishonesty after an unblemished record."

"I am glad to hear this," said Captain Macartney, "and I am exceedingly obliged to you. Some other time I shall ask you to favor me with the whole story," and he went thoughtfully away.

CHAPTER VIII

AN INTERVIEW IN THE LIBRARY

AT ten o'clock on the evening of the day that Captain Macartney made his call on Dr. Camperdown Judy was restlessly hitching herself up and down the big front hall at Pinewood.

"Oh, that crutch!" ejaculated Mrs. Colonibel, who was playing cards with Valentine in the drawing room; "how I hate to hear it."

"Don't you like to hear your offspring taking a little exercise?" he asked tantalizingly.

"Not when she's waiting for that detestable French girl," said Mrs. Colonibel. "I do wish Stanton would send her away."

"Everything comes to her who waits," said Valentine. "The trouble is with you women that you won't wait. Play, cousin."

"Here she is," exclaimed Judy, and she flung open the door with a joyful, "Welcome home."

Vivienne was just getting out of a sleigh. "Ah, Judy, how kind of you to wait for me," she said. "Did you get my note?"

"Yes; but nobody asked where you were except mamma."

Vivienne's face clouded slightly, then it brightened again. "Where is Mr. Armour?"

"In the library; he always spends his evenings there."

"I wish to speak to him. Do you think I could go in."

"Yes; what do you want to say?"

"I will tell you afterward," and with a smile Vivienne let her cloak slip from her shoulders and knocked at a near door.

Judy with her head on one side like a little cat listened to the brief "Come in," then as Vivienne disappeared from view she spun round and round the hall in a kind of dance.

"What is the matter with you?" asked her mother, coming from the drawing room.

Judy stopped. "I have a pain in my mind."

"What kind of a pain, Judy?" asked Valentine, looking over Mrs. Colonibel's shoulder.

"A joyful pain."

"Miss Delavigne has gone upstairs, has she?" asked Mrs. Colonibel.

"Yes, she came in," said Judy evasively.

"Why don't you go to bed?" continued her mother.

"Because I choose to stay here and read," and Judy seizing a book flung herself on a divan.

"Well, I am going," said Mrs. Colonibel; "good-night," and she turned toward the staircase

Valentine tossed a cap on his black head and opening a door leading to a veranda ran swiftly down a snowy path to the cottage.

When Vivienne entered the library Mr. Armour looked up in some surprise and with a faint trace of annoyance.

"I hope I am not disturbing you," she said politely.

"Not at all," and he turned his back on the table bestrewn with papers and invited her by a wave of the hand to sit down.

He stood himself leaning one elbow on the mantel, and looked curiously down at her as she sat glancing about at the book-cases and the rose and ashen hangings of his handsome room.

What a strangely self-possessed girl she was. Could he think of another who would come boldly into his presence and demand an interview with his own dignified self? No, he could not. Well, she was a foreigner. How he hated the type; the smooth black bands of hair, the level heavy eyebrows, the burning eyes. What havoc a face like this had already wrought in his family, and he shaded his eyes with his hand and averted them from her as she ejaculated:

"I beg your pardon for keeping you. I will say what I wish very shortly. I have just come from dining with the Macartneys."

"At their hotel?"

"Yes."

"I wish that you had consulted me," he said in his most chilling manner. "Hotels are public places for young girls."

"Not when they are under proper chaperonage," she said gently; "and really I did not suppose that you took any interest in my movements."

He glanced suspiciously at her, but saw that there was no hint of fault-finding in her manner.

"I have come in this evening to tell you something that I know will please you," she said.

Something to please him—he wondered in a dull way what it was.

"Captain Macartney wishes to marry me," she said.

He stared incredulously at her. "Captain Macartney!"

"Yes; he asked me this evening."

He pondered over the news for some instants in silence, then he said, "Why do you say that this will please me?"

Vivienne looked steadily at him. "Mr. Armour, you cannot conceal the fact from me that I am a great burden to you."

"A great burden," he repeated frigidly. "Surely you forget yourself, Miss Delavigne."

"No, no," she replied with animation. "Do not be vexed with me, Mr. Armour; I am just beginning to understand things. You know that I have

no father and mother. When I was a little girl away across the sea, and the other children went home for their holidays, I used to cry to think that I had no home. When I got older I found out from your letters that you did not wish me to come. I was surprised that you at last sent for me, but yet delighted, for I thought, even if the Armours do not care for me I shall be in my native land, I shall never leave it; yet, yet——"

She paused for an instant and seemed to be struggling with some emotion. Mr. Armour raised his heavy eyelids just long enough to glance at her, then dropped them again. His eyes carried the picture to the reddish-brown tiles of the hearth —the pretty graceful figure of the half girl, half woman, before him, her little foreign gestures, the alluring softness of her dark eyes. Yet the picture possessed no attraction for him. It only appealed slightly to his half-deadened sensibilities. He was doing wrong to dislike her so intensely. He must keep his feelings under better control.

"Well," he said less coldly, "you were going to say something else."

"I was going to say," remarked Vivienne, a bright impatient color coming and going in her cheeks, "that one cannot live on patriotism. I thought that I would not miss my friends—the people who have been good to me. I find that I do. In this house I feel that I am an intruder——"

"And the Macartneys adore you," he said, a steely gleam of amusement coming into his eyes, "and consequently you wish to be with them."

"That is a slight exaggeration," said Vivienne composedly; "yet we will let it pass. With your permission I will marry Captain Macartney."

"Suppose I withhold my permission."

Vivienne glanced keenly at him. Was this man of marble capable of a jest? Yes, he was. "If you do," she said coolly, "I will run away." Then she laughed with the ease and gayety of girlhood and Mr. Armour watching her smiled gravely.

"I suppose the Macartneys have been much touched by your stories of our cruel treatment of you," he said sarcastically.

Vivienne tapped her foot impatiently on the floor. Did he really think that she was a tell-tale?

"Ah yes," she said nonchalantly; "I have told them that you detest me and allow me only bread and water, that I sleep in a garret, and your father and Mrs. Colonibel run away whenever they see me, small Judy being my only friend in the house."

Mr. Armour smiled more broadly. How quick she was to follow his lead! "Does my father really avoid you?" he asked.

There was some complacency in his tone and Vivienne holding her head a trifle higher responded: "I make no complaint of members of your family to you or to any other person, Mr. Armour."

He frowned irritably and with one of the peremptory hand gestures that Vivienne so much disliked he went on: "Why did not Macartney speak to me himself about this affair?"

"He will do so to-morrow. I wished to see you first."

"Why?"

"Will you be kind enough to excuse me from telling you?"

"No," said Mr. Armour unexpectedly; "I wish to know."

Vivienne shook her head in an accession of girlish independence that was highly distasteful to him.

"I cannot endure a mystery," he said sternly.

"Nor I," said Vivienne demurely; "but really, Mr. Armour, I do not wish to tell you."

"Those Irish people are spoiling her," he reflected. Vivienne was watching him and after a time she said relentingly:

"However, it is a slight thing—you may think it worse than it is if I do not tell you. I"—proudly—"did not wish Captain Macartney to be the first to tell you lest, lest——"

"Lest what?"

"Lest you should seem too glad to get rid of me," she concluded.

"What do you mean?" he asked haughtily.

Vivienne pushed back her chair and stepped a

little farther away from him. "You may think that because I am young, Mr. Armour, I have no pride; I have. I bitterly, bitterly resent your treatment of me. I have tried to please you; never a word of praise have you given me all these years. I come back to you to be treated like an outcast. My father was a gentleman, if he was poor, and of a family superior to that of the Armours. You will be glad, glad, glad to throw me off——"

She stopped to dash away an angry tear from her cheek while Mr. Armour surveyed her in the utmost astonishment.

"You think because I am a girl I do not care," she went on, her fine small nostrils dilating with anger. "Girls care as well as men."

"How old are you?" ejaculated Mr. Armour stupidly.

"You do not even know my age," she retorted, "you—my guardian," and with a glance of sublime displeasure she tried to put her hand on the door handle.

"Stop a moment," said Mr. Armour confusedly.

"I have talked long enough to you," she responded. "You have made me lose my temper; a thing I seldom do," and with this parting shaft she left the room.

Mr. Armour stood holding the door open for some time after she left him. Then he stooped

down and picked a crumpled handkerchief from the floor.

"What irrepressibility!" he muttered; "a most irritating girl. I shall be glad to have her taken off my hands, and she is angry about it. Well, it cannot be helped," and he seated himself in a quiet, dull fashion by the fire. Worry, annoyance, dread, and unutterable weariness oppressed him, yet through it all his face preserved its expression of icy calm. A stranger looking into the room would have said: "A quiet, handsome man meditating in the solitude of his library;" not by any means, a poor, weary pilgrim to whom life was indeed no joyous thing but a grievous, irksome burden that he longed to, yet dared not, lay down.

Vivienne went slowly upstairs resting one hand on the railing as she did so.

"Well, my dear," said Judy, meeting her halfway, "what makes your face so red? Have you had an exhibition of Grand-Turkism?"

"Judy," said Vivienne, stopping short, "I knew before I went to that room to-night that Mr. Armour likes to have his own way."

"You are a match for him," said Judy dryly; "now tell me what you wanted to say to him."

"I wished to announce my engagement to Captain Macartney."

"Oh, you bad, bad girl," exclaimed Judy; "oh, you bad girl!"

"A bad girl!" exclaimed Vivienne.

"Come along," said Judy, dragging her upstairs. "Come to our room. Oh, I am so disappointed! I had other plans for you."

"Indeed—what were they?"

"I don't know. I must forget them, I suppose. But don't be too hard on Stanton, Vivienne."

"What do you mean by being too hard? You have never heard me say a word against him."

"No, but you look things with those big eyes of yours. He has a detestable time with Uncle Colonel and Val."

"In what way?" asked Vivienne feebly.

"Because they are demons; regular dissipated demons, and he is their keeper. They lead him a life; that's why he's so solemn. What did he say about your engagement?"

"I fancy that it meets with his approbation."

"Approbation—fiddlesticks! Do you love your *fiancé*, Vivienne?"

"No, certainly not. He is a gentleman; I like him, and he is very good to his stepmother."

"What an excellent reason for marrying him," said Judy sarcastically; "he is good to his stepmother."

"Therefore he will be good to me."

"Well, you're about half right. Let us go to bed. I don't feel like discussing this engagement of yours."

Vivienne looked wistfully after the little elfish figure limping away from her. "Judy," she said, "Judy."

The girl stopped.

"Don't you think it is nauseating to hear some girls gushing about their dear darling lovers?"

"Yes, perfectly so."

"So many of those terrible enthusiastic marriages turn out badly."

"A great many; I must get Stargarde to talk to you about the marriage question."

"Who is Stargarde?" asked Vivienne curiously.

"Stargarde is Stargarde," said Judy enigmatically; "wait till you see her. Good-night."

CHAPTER IX

THE PAVILION

DR. CAMPERDOWN lived in a large, bare stone house a few blocks distant from his office. Late one afternoon he stood at one of the back windows from which he commanded a magnificent view of the harbor.

"Bah! it's going to be cold to-night," he said, suddenly banging down the window; "the snow clouds have blown away."

He looked about his lonely room, where the furniture was ugly and scanty and the general aspect of things cheerless. "Desolate, eh," he muttered thoughtfully fixing his eyes on the expiring embers of the fire. "I'll go and see Stargarde. How long since I've seen the——?" and some endearing epithet lost itself between his lips and his moustache.

"It is twelve days—nearly a fortnight," he went on after a pause. "Time for another spree," and with grim cheerfulness he lighted the gas and seizing a brush and comb began briskly to smooth his towzled head.

After his refractory locks were in order he went to his wardrobe where with many head shakings he

turned over his whole stock of coats before he could find one to suit him."

"I guess this will do," he said at last, shaking out one which was minus one button only. "She'll be sure to spy that vacant spot," he went on dubiously. "Where's that old beldame to sew it on? Hannah! fairy, sylph, beauty, come up here!"

There was no sound from the rooms below. With a quick ejaculation he threw the coat over his arm and went down the staircase two steps at a time. Opening the doors of a dull dining room and a still more dull and comfortless drawing room he looked in to find them tenantless.

"Must be in her lowest den," he said, vaulting like a boy down a narrower flight of stairs leading to a kitchen. There indeed he found an old woman groveling over a fire.

"Hannah," he shouted, holding his coat toward her. "There's a button gone, will you sew on another?"

"Eh, what's that ye said, Mr. Brian?" queried the old woman. "A button? Yes indeed, ye shall have it; just ye wait till I get my workbasket," and she started to leave the kitchen, but he restrained her with an impatient, "Where is it?"

"In the right top-hand corner of my second drawer, me boy, if ye'll be so kind. Hannah's limbs is gettin' old."

He shook off the affectionate hand she laid on

his shoulder and leaped upstairs again. When he returned with her basket the old woman slowly lifted the cover. "Did ye no bring the thimble?" she asked in surprise.

"No—confound the thimble! Why don't you keep it in your basket?"

"Because I always keeps it in the left-hand corner of the window," she answered mildly, "behind the picture of your sainted father——" but Dr. Camperdown was gone, springing up the steps again in a state of desperate hurry.

"If you don't sew that button on in five minutes," he vociferated in her ear when he came back, "I'll turn you out of the house to-morrow."

"Sure, Mr. Brian, ye know ye'd do no such thing," said the old woman throwing him a remonstrating glance. "Ye'd go yourself first."

He laughed shortly, then exclaimed: "Oh, sew it on—sew it on and don't talk. I'll give you a dollar if you'll have it on in two minutes."

At this the old woman's fingers flew, and in a short time the button was in place, the coat on Dr. Camperdown's back, and with a hasty "I'll not be back to dinner," he had hurried out of the kitchen to the floor above, where he rapidly donned a cap and coat and went out into the street.

The air was keen and frosty and he drew great breaths of it into his capacious lungs.

"I could walk twenty miles," he muttered as he swung himself along by lighted shops and houses.

As he went on the streets became more and more shabby. The gutters about him were dirty and many of the houses were mere wooden shells and a most insufficient protection against the winter winds.

Midway on the dirtiest and least respectable of the streets he stopped in front of a long, clean brick building erected by the charitable people of the town for the better housing of the poor. To the street it presented high walls pierced by windows of good size. Inside was a large yard overlooked by a double row of verandas that ran along the building. Passing through an archway he entered this yard, looked across it at the washhouses, storerooms, and a little eating house with gayly flaunting lights, then turning to his left stepped on a veranda and knocked lightly at a door.

"Come in," said a voice like a bell, and softly turning the handle he entered a little plainly furnished room where a bright fire blazed merrily.

There was one elegant bit of furniture in the room, an elaborately carved davenport, where sat a tall, magnificently proportioned woman with a white, firm, smooth skin like a baby's, a pair of deep blue eyes, and a crown of pale golden hair that lay in coils on the top of her head and waved down in little ringlets and circlets over her neck.

Ah, that neck—he would give worlds to touch it; and Brian Camperdown stood trembling like a boy as he looked at it. The woman had her back to him and was writing busily. Presently the pen stopped running over the paper and she thoughtfully leaned her head on a shapely white hand.

"It is cold," she said suddenly. "Close the door, my friend—ah, Brian, is it you?" turning around and giving him a hand over the back of her chair. "I thought it was one of the people. Wait an instant, won't you, till I finish my letter? It is so important," and with an angelic smile and a womanly dimple she turned back to her desk.

"I'm in no hurry," he said composedly, taking off his coat and hanging it behind the door on a hook with whose location he seemed to be quite well acquainted. Then he arranged his huge limbs in an arm-chair and stared at her.

Though the time was December she had on a cotton gown that had large loose sleeves fitting tightly around her wrists. About her neck and over her breast it was laid in folds that outlined her beautiful form. At her waist it was drawn in by a ribbon, and hung from that downward in a graceful fullness utterly at variance with the sheath-like fit of the prevailing style of dress. Though the gown was cotton there was a bit of fine lace in the neck.

"Some one must have given it to her," muttered Dr. Camperdown, whose eagle eye soon espied its

quality. "She would never buy it. Flora probably, if"—with a sneer—"she could make up her mind to part with it." Then he said aloud and very humbly, "Can't you talk to me yet?"

"Yes, yes, Brian," and the woman laughed in her clear, bell-like tones. "I have finished," and she stood up to put her letter on the mantelpiece.

When she was standing one saw what a superb creature she was. A goddess come down from her pedestal would not be more unlike the average woman in appearance than she. Her draperies being almost as loose and unconfined as those of the ancient Greek and Roman women she was untrammeled, and being untrammeled she was graceful in spite of her great height and comely proportions. She was like a big, beautiful child with her innocent, charming manners and blue unworldly eyes, and yet there was something about her that showed she had lived and suffered. She was a woman and into her life had been crowded the experiences of the lives of a dozen ordinary women.

"It is some time since I have seen you, Brian," she said in a fresh, joyous voice.

"Yes," he articulated, "I have been trying to keep away. Had to come now. I want to talk to you about the Delavigne child. She has arrived. Stanton has brought her here."

"Has he?" and Stargarde clasped her hands. "When did she come?"

"A few days ago."

"Have you been out to see her?"

"No, I have been busy."

"And I have been away; but I will go as soon as I can," and the woman absently let her eyes meet those of her guest till he was obliged to shut his own to get rid of their dazzle and glitter.

Unfortunately for him she noticed what he was doing. "Brian Camperdown," she exclaimed, "open your eyes. I won't talk to you if you sit there half asleep," and she burst into a merry peal of laughter that a baby might have envied.

"I'm not sleepy," he said hastily; "I was thinking," and he surveyed her in unwinking attention.

"Well, do not think; listen to me. That little French girl is so often in my thoughts, and lately in particular I have not been able to get her out of my head."

"I daresay," he growled. "There are more people than the Delavigne child in your head—a whole colony of them. I wonder they don't worry you to death."

"I hope she will let me be kind to her," said Stargarde earnestly.

"You needn't worry," said Dr. Camperdown. "She's going to be well looked after. I don't see why every one comes rushing to me. My father began it when he died with his admonition to do something for the Delavigne child if I had a chance.

You have always been at me, and yesterday Macartney cornered me."

"Macartney! not the Irish officer who used to admire Flora!"

"The same."

"What does he want you to do?"

"To look after her in a general way. He's in love with her."

"Oh, Brian!"

"I suppose I'm a simpleton for telling you," he said eyeing her reluctantly. "You women have men just like wax in your hands. You twist everything out of us."

"I do not think you mean that," she said quietly

He scrambled from his chair and before she knew his intention had her shapely hands in his and was mumbling over them: "Darling, darling, I would trust you with my soul."

She looked down at him sadly as he passionately kissed her fingers and returned them to her lap. Then she leaned over and stroked softly his tumbled head, and murmuring, "Poor boy!" pointed to the clock.

"I was going to ask you to stay to tea," she said, "but——"

"I will be good—I will be good," he ejaculated lifting his flushed face to hers and hurrying back into his chair. "It was a moment of madness; it won't happen again."

"That is what you always say, Brian."

"I will keep my promise this time. I really will." Then forcing his hands deep down into his pockets, he said insinuatingly: "You can so easily stop my display of devotion, it is a strange thing that you don't do it."

"How can I do so?" she asked with an eagerness that was not pleasing to him.

"By marrying me."

"Marry you to get rid of you," she said with incredulity. "Ah, Brian, I know you better than that. You will be a good husband to the woman you marry. I can imagine myself married to you," she went on pensively; "we should be what is almost better than lovers, and that is companions. You would be with me as constantly as Mascerene there," and she pointed to a huge, black dog lying with watchful head on his paws behind her davenport.

"You will marry me some day," said the man doggedly. "If I thought you would not, I would tie a stone around my neck and drop into the harbor to-morrow. No, I would not," he added bitterly. "We don't do that sort of thing nowadays. I'd have the stone in my heart instead of around my neck and I'd live on, a sour, ugly old man, till God saw fit to rid the world of me. Do you know what love, even hopeless love, does for a man, Stargarde? what my love for you does for me? What have I to remember of my childhood? Painful visions;

my father and mother each side of the fire like this sorrowing at the wickedness of the world. Then I met you, a bonny, light-hearted girl. I loved you the first time I saw you. You have been in my thoughts every minute of the time since. In the morning, at night in my dreams. With you I am still an ugly, cross-grained man; without you I should be a devil."

The woman listened attentively to what he said, shading her eyes from the firelight with her hand, and looking at him compassionately. "Poor old Brian, poor old Brian," she said when he sank back into his chair and closed his mouth with a snap. "I am so sorry for you. I should never have the heart to marry another man when you love me so much. If I ever marry it will be you. Still, you know how it is. My heart is in my work. It is not with you."

"If you felt it going out toward me would you stop it?" he said eagerly.

"No, a thousand times no," she said warmly. "I believe that the noblest and best thing a man or woman can do is to marry. God intended us to do so. If a man loves a woman and she loves him, they should marry if there are no obstacles in the way. Is not that what I am always glorifying, Brian, the family, the family—the noblest of all institutions upon the earth? The one upon which the special blessing of our Creator rests. But," in a

lower voice and looking earnestly at him, "I should never be guilty of that crime of crimes, namely, marrying a man whom I do not love."

"I know you would not," he said uneasily.

"You would not wish me to, Brian," she continued. "You are an honest, God-fearing man. If I could put my hand in yours now and say, 'Here I am, but I do not love you,' you would spurn such a gift, would you not? You would say, 'I prefer to wait till you can give me your whole self, not the least worthy part of yourself.'"

He stirred about restlessly in his chair when she paused as if expecting some answer from him. "I do not know," he murmured at last. "If you gave me the chance, I think I would embrace it. I think, Stargarde, that if you would come out of this and live with me, you would get to like me."

"Oh, vain and stupid fallacy," she exclaimed despairingly; "can you not see it?"

He did not answer, and there was a long silence between them, till she began to speak again, regarding him with a lovely smile of pity and affection. "You see what a terrible responsibility has been laid upon women, Brian. Men, by their long habit of indulging themselves in every impulse and giving freer rein to passion than women do, cannot so well control themselves. The woman must stand firm. I, by reason of your great affection for me, which I accept with all gratitude and humility,

feel that I have a charge over you. I wish with all my heart that you could transfer your love to some other woman. If you do not and cannot, and I ever have the happiness to regard you with the same affection that you regard me, you may be sure that I shall marry you."

The light of hope that played over his rugged features almost made them handsome, till Stargarde went on warningly: "But that day I fear will never come. Looking upon you as a dear brother, and having lived to the age of thirty years without falling in love with any man, I fear that I shall never do so."

"Is that true?" he gasped with the famished eagerness of a dog that snatches for a whole joint and only gets a bone. "Have you never fancied any of the men that have fancied you?"

"Never," she said with a smile and a shake of her head.

"How many proposals have you had?"

"I forget; about twenty, I think."

His mouth worked viciously as if he would like to devour her quondam lovers.

"What a long way we have wandered from Vivienne Delavigne," said Stargarde. "You were saying that Captain Macartney is in love with her. Does she love him?"

"No, though it will probably end in that. He's very much in earnest, for he vowed to me that he

couldn't marry. When a man does that you may be sure he's just about to throw everything overboard for some woman."

"Does he know all about her?"

"Yes; but his stepmother stands behind egging him on. She's probably promised a generous settlement on ma'm'selle if he marries her. The disgrace was the black beast in the way; but I imagine he'll make up his mind to hang on to the old marquis and ignore the embezzlement. A decent fellow, Macartney, as those military men go," he added in the condescending tone in which a civilian in Halifax will allow a few virtues to the military sojourners in the city.

"I like him," said Stargarde emphatically, "yet Vivienne Delavigne may not. I wish, Brian, that she was a little older, and you a little fickle."

"Why do you wish that?"

"Because, what a charming wife she would make for you. I am sure she is good and gentle, and she is alone in the world."

"And you?" he said coolly.

"Oh, I have enough here," she said, stretching out her arms lovingly as if she could take in her embrace the whole of the large brick building. "My work is my husband."

He was about to reply to her but was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Brian," said Stargarde hurriedly, "I forgot to

say that I have other company to tea. I hope you won't object, and do try not to notice her. She is one of my charges, and oftentimes a troublesome one." Then turning toward the door she said: "Come in; come in, dear."

CHAPTER X

ZEB AND A TEA PARTY.

THE door swung slowly open and a small, miserably thin child stood narrowly inspecting them through black, curly wisps of hair that hung down over her forehead and made her look like a terrier. She had on a ragged, dirty frock, and a dingy plaid shawl covered her shoulders.

"I am glad to see you, dear child," said Stargarde, going to meet her and taking her warmly by the hand. "Come into the bedroom and take off your things."

The child picked off the back of her black head a tiny boy's cap that lay there like an ugly patch, and plucking impatiently at her shawl to draw it from her shoulders, flashed Stargarde an adoring glance and followed her into an inner room.

"Will you wash your face, dear?" said Stargarde, pouring some water from a ewer to a little basin that she placed on a chair. "Here is a clean towel and some of the nicest soap. Just smell it. Somebody sent it to me from Paris."

The girl tossed back her hair from her dirty face and dabbled her hands in the water. "Who's that

cove out there?" she said with an ugly scowl and jerking her head in the direction of the other room.

"A friend of mine, Dr. Camperdown. He is a nice man, Zeb. I hope you will like him."

"Them dirty swells, I hate 'em," returned the child.

Stargarde was silent. To try at the outset to reform the vocabulary of a child of the gutter was, she knew, a mistake. The girl had been brought up in an evil atmosphere, and her little perverted mind was crammed with bitter prejudices against all who were better off in regard to this world's goods than she was herself. Stargarde watched pityingly the sullen face bending over the basin.

"He wants yer," said the child suddenly, and with an acute spasm of jealousy contracting her brows. "I seed it in him. He'll take yer away from the Pav."

Stargarde blushed a little. Just for one instant she was tempted by a natural disinclination not to discuss her love affairs with such an uncongenial being as the one before her. Then she remembered her invariable maxim, "No prevarication. Perfect frankness in my dealings with my fellowmen," and said gently: "I am not willing to go, Zeb, I shall stay here."

"Not if he coaxes yer?" said the child eagerly.

"No, Zeb."

The little renegade scrubbed vigorously at her face without making reply. Then polishing her hands with a towel she approached Stargarde. "Will yer kiss me now?" she said humbly.

"Yes, darling," and the beautiful woman took the dirty child to her breast in a warm embrace.

The child's clothes were not clean. In fact months had passed over her head since her dress had made acquaintance with the washtub. "Zeb," said Stargarde hesitatingly, "I have a little cotton frock here"—the child frowned angrily and regarded her with a glance as proud as Lucifer's. "It is just like mine," went on Stargarde. "Look, Zeb."

She took a small garment from a closet and showed the child the coquettish frills adorning the skirt and neck. "Seeing it's you," said the child graciously, "I'll take it. But we's no beggars, mind that! Mam and pap'll kill me, likely, but I don't care," and with a fine assumption of indifference she pulled off her ragged gown, kicked it contemptuously aside, and allowed Stargarde to slip over her head the new and pretty dress which tortures would not have forced her to don, if it had not been for the fortunate occurrence that it was made from a similar piece of material to that clothing the woman she so passionately admired.

"I will speak to your mother about it," said Stargarde reassuringly, as she buttoned her visitor up. "I don't think she will mind." Zeb thrust a

hand into hers without speaking and walked silently out to Dr. Camperdown with her. When Stargarde introduced her to him she put out her tongue, stuck up her shoulder at him, and half turning her back drew up a little footstool to the grate, to which she sat so close that Stargarde was in momentary fear lest she should catch fire.

"Now, what shall we have for tea?" said Stargarde cheerily. "Let every one choose what he would like. What are you for, Brian?"

"Anything you choose to give me," he said agreeably, "provided there is enough of it. I'm as hungry as a hunter this evening. Good breakfast, but patients were dogging me all lunch time, and I haven't broken my fast yet."

"Well, we'll give you something substantial," replied his hostess. "What will you have, Zeb?"

"Something in the line o' birds," said the child, a hard and hungry look coming into her eyes. "I sees 'em hangin' up in the shops, I smells 'em and sees the dogs lickin' the bones, but never a taste gets I. Say turkey, missis, or goose."

"They have some turkeys over at the restaurant, I saw them to-day," said Stargarde clapping her hands like a child. "We'll have one, and stuffing, Zeb, and hot potato. Come, let us go and get it."

The child sprang up, and clasping her hand Stargarde hurried out of the room and across the yard to the gay little eating house, going with the utmost

speed so that they might not take cold. Breathless and laughing they pulled up outside the door, and opening it, walked soberly in. The child squeezed her patron's hand with delight. The large, bright room before her, with its light walls adorned with pictures and its floor covered with little tables where people were eating and drinking, was like a glimpse of heaven to her. Stargarde went up to the counter.

"Good-evening, Mary," she said to a pretty young girl there; "can you let me have a basket to put some purchases in? Ah, that is just what I want," as the girl, diving behind the counter brought up one of the light flexible things made by the Indians of Nova Scotia. "Now first of all we want a turkey, a small one—no, a large one," in response to a warning pressure from Zeb's fingers. "See, there is one coming from the kitchen on a platter. Isn't he a monster! Put him in a covered dish, Mary, and pop him into the basket with a dish of potatoes and—what vegetables have you?"

"Turnips, beets, parsnips, carrots, squash——"

"Well, give us some of each, but we'll have to get the boy to help us carry them. We never can take all these things. And cranberry sauce, don't forget that. Pickles, Zeb? Do you want some of them? Very good, we'll have a bottle. Have you made your mince pies yet? No. Well, we'll have a lemon one and a strawberry tart and some fruit. Will you have grapes or oranges, Zeb?"

"Dates, and figs, and nuts," gurgled the child in almost speechless delight.

Stargarde stifled a laugh. "So be it Mary, and cheese and crackers for Dr. Camperdown. Now Zeb let us take this basket and run home and Mary will send the rest."

Camperdown looked up in amazement as the two burst into the room. "What's the excitement?" he said, getting up and standing with his back to the fire. "Here, let me put your basket on the table. What's all this?"

"Dear Brian," said Stargarde breathlessly, "you must not talk. Only help us. Set all these dishes on the hearth to keep hot. I should have set my table before we went to the restaurant. Alas, I am a poor housekeeper. Zeb dear, here is the cloth; spread it on the table; and Brian do help her to put the knives and forks and plates around. I will make the tea or coffee—which would you rather have?"

"Coffee for me, if it's dinner," said Camperdown. "I smell meat, don't I? What do you call this meal, anyway?"

"I call it anything," said Stargarde, "only it must be eaten hot. Cold things are detestable."

"Tea for me," piped up Zeb shrilly; "I hates coffee."

Stargarde uncomplainingly searched in her cupboard for two vessels instead of one—brought out

a small earthenware teapot and a tin coffeepot, and set them on a trivet which she fastened to the grate. Then finding a small kettle, she filled it with water and put it on the glowing coals.

"I call this pleasant!" exclaimed Dr. Camperdown a few minutes later. The dishes were all nicely arranged on a cloth as white as snow. He had a spotlessly clean but coarse *serviette* spread across his knees, and was flashing glances of admiration across the mammoth turkey before him at Stargarde, seated at the other end of the board. "I call this pleasant!" he repeated, picking up his knife and fork, "and a woman who serves a dinner smoking hot deserves a medal. My old dame thinks it a crime to put things before me more than lukewarm. I hear her coming up stairs with my dinner. Tramp, tramp—down on a step to rest. Tramp, hobble, up again—down on another, just to aggravate me—bah, I'll dismiss her to-morrow!"

Stargarde looked at him without a shadow on her resplendent face. "You are like the dogs, Brian," she said gayly; "your bark is worse than your bite. You love that old woman, you know you do."

"I don't love any one," he growled. "You're not eating anything there. Stop fanning yourself and attend to your plate—have some more turkey. This is a beauty. Where did he come from? The country, I'll wager. This isn't city flesh on his bones."

"Cornwallis," said Stargarde thoughtfully. "Unfortunate creature—I wish we did not have to eat him."

"Now Stargarde," said the man warmly, "for one meal, no hobbies. Let the S. P. C. and the G. H. A. and the L. M. S. alone for once. Talk nonsense to me and this young lady here," turning politely to his fellow-guest.

His term was inadvisedly chosen, and Zeb flashed him a wicked glance over the bone that her little, sharp teeth were gnawing. Stargarde to her dismay saw that there was a smouldering fire of distrust and dislike between her two guests, that at any moment might break into open flame. Zeb was jealous of Dr. Camperdown. With ready, quick suspicion, she divined the fact that his sympathies were not with her kind. He would take away from her and her fellow-paupers the beautiful woman who at present lived only for them, and she hated him accordingly.

She had only recently come to Halifax. She had experienced different and worse degrees of misery in other cities, and now that a new, bright world was dawning upon her, it was not pleasant to know that her benefactor might be snatched at any moment from her. So she hated him, and he almost hated her as a representative of a class that absorbed the attention of the only woman in the world that he cared for, and who, but for them, would, he

knew, devote herself to the endeavor of making more human and more happy his present aching, lonely, miserable heart.

Aware of all this, Stargarde kept the conversation flowing smoothly in channels apart from personal concerns. She talked continuously herself, and laughed like a girl full of glee when the moment for changing the plates having arrived, Dr. Camperdown and Zeb politely rising to assist her, left the table deserted.

When they reseated themselves she drew Zeb's chair closer to her own, for she saw that the child had satisfied her hunger and at any moment might commence hostilities.

"Will you have some tart, Zeb?" she asked kindly.

"Oh, land, no!" said the child; "I'm stuffed. Give it to piggy there. He's good for an hour yet," and she pointed a disdainful finger to the other end of the table.

Dr. Camperdown had a large appetite—an appetite that was, in fact, immense, but he did not like to be reminded of it, and looked with considerable animosity at the small child.

"Do not pay any attention to her, Brian," said Stargarde rapidly in German, then she turned to Zeb. "Dr. Camperdown had no dinner. He is hungry. Won't you go and look at those picture books till we finish?"

"I don't want ter," said the child, as she nestled closer to her, "I likes to be with yer."

What could Stargarde do in the face of such devotion? She left Dr. Camperdown to his own devices, and cracking nuts for the child searched diligently for a philopena. Having found one she shared it with her, related the pretty German custom concerning it, and promised Zeb a present if she would first surprise her the next day.

Zeb listened in fascinated attention, only throwing Dr. Camperdown a glance occasionally, as much as to say, "You see, she is giving me her undivided attention now."

And he was foolish enough to be restive. "If he would only be sensible—two children together," murmured Stargarde, as she got up to pour him out his coffee. As a student of human nature, she was amused at the attitude of the professional man toward the outcast; as a philanthropist, she was fearful lest there should be driven away from her the little bit of vicious childhood that she had charmed to her side.

"If he would only be sensible and think of something else!" she went on to herself. "They'll come to an open rupture soon. I must try to restrain Zeb, for she, alas, is capable of anything. I won't look at him as I give him his coffee."

Unfortunately she was obliged to do so, for as she set it before him, he said childishly, "Do you put

the sugar in," thereby obliging her to give him a remonstrating glance.

Zeb saw the blue eyes meet the admiring gray ones and immediately issued an order in her shrill voice, "Gimme a cupper tea."

Stargarde could not scold people. She was a born mother—loving and patient and humoring weaknesses perhaps to a greater degree than was always wise. She patiently waited upon her second troublesome guest, and sat down beside her without saying a word, but in an unlucky instant when she was obliged to go to the cupboard for an additional supply of cream, the war broke out—the duluge arrived.

Zeb, filling her mouth with tea, adroitly squirted a thin stream of it the whole length of the table across Camperdown's shoulder.

He saw it coming, and uttering a wrathful exclamation, jumped up from his seat. Stargarde heard him, and turned around hastily just in time to hear Zeb say contemptuously, "Oh, shut up—you'll get it in the mouth next time."

When Camperdown at Stargarde's request explained what had happened, her lovely face became troubled and she looked as if she were going to cry.

"Zeb," she said with trembling lips, "you must go away. I cannot have you here any longer if you do such things."

The child sprang to her. "Don't ye, don't ye do that. I'll slick up. Gimme a lickin', only let me stay. I'll not look at him—the devil!" with a furious glance at Camperdown. "I'll turn round face to the wall, only, only don't send me out in the cold."

What could Stargarde do? Pardon, pardon, always pardon, that was the secret of her marvelous hold on the members of her enormous family. She drew up the little footstool to a corner, placed the child on it, and shaking her head at Dr. Camperdown, sat down opposite him. "Take people for what they are—not for what they ought to be," she said to him in German.

"You are a good woman, Stargarde," he returned softly in the same language. "I can give you no higher praise. And I have had a good dinner," he continued, drawing back from the table. "What are you going to do with those dishes? Mayn't I help you wash them?"

"No, thank you. Zeb will assist me when you have gone."

He smiled at her hint to withdraw, and placing the rocking-chair by the fire for her, said wistfully: "Do you really wish me to go?"

"Well, you may stay for half an hour longer," she replied, as indulgent with him as she was with the child.

As soon as the words left her lips, he ensconced

himself comfortably in the arm-chair, and gazing into the fire listened dreamily to the low-murmured sentences Stargarde was addressing to the child, who had crept into her arms begging to be rocked.

"I wish I could smoke," he said presently; "I think you don't object to the smell of tobacco, Stargarde?"

"No," she said quietly, "not the smell of it."

"But the waste, the hurtfulness of the habit, eh?"

"Yes."

"I'll take the responsibility of that, if you let me have one pipe, Stargarde, only one."

"One then let it be," she replied.

With eyes fixed on her, he felt for his tobacco pouch and pipe, which he blindly filled, only looking at it when the time for lighting came. Then in a state of utter beatification he leaned back, smoking quietly and listening to her clear voice, as she swung slowly to and fro, talking to the child.

After a time Zeb fell asleep and Stargarde's voice died away.

Camperdown rose slowly to his feet. He knew that it was time for him to be gone and that it was better for him to call attention to it himself than to wait for an ignominious dismissal as soon as Stargarde should come out of the reverie into which she had fallen.

"Good-bye," he said in startling fashion. "Take notice that I'm going of my own accord for once,

and don't put me out any more. I'm trying to deserve my good fortune, you see."

"Good-night, Brian," she said gently.

He seized his cap and coat, flashed her a look of inexpressible affection from his deep-set eyes, and was gone.

CHAPTER XI

MRS. MACARTNEY GETS A FRIGHT

VIVIENNE and Judy were in their sitting room reading by the light of a lamp on the table between them when the younger girl suddenly pricked up her ears.

"There's a puffing, panting sound on the staircase," she said, "as if a steam-tug were approaching. It must be your Irish friend. I'll decamp, for I don't want to see her." She picked up her crutch and was about to flee to her bedroom when she was arrested by a succession of squeals.

"Holy powers save us," moaned Mrs. Macartney bursting into the room. "There's something odd about this house when the devil lives in the top story of it."

"Thank you," said Judy smartly; "perhaps you don't know that these are my apartments."

Mrs. Macartney did not hear her. Holding Vivienne's hands, and half laughing, half crying, she was rocking herself to and fro.

"He had on a nightcap and a woman's gown, and he goggled at me from an open door; and, me dear, his face was like a coal——"

"It's Mammy Juniper that you've seen, dear Mrs. Macartney," exclaimed Vivienne.

"And who is Mammy Juniper?" inquired her visitor, stopping short to stare at her.

"She's an old family servant; sit down here and I'll tell you about her."

"Ah me; ah me," wailed the Irish lady dropping on a sofa; "we don't have people of her color in my peaceful home. Sure, I thought me last hour had come."

"She is very black," said Vivienne gravely; "and she despises the other colored people here. Mammy is a Maroon. Have you ever heard of that race?"

"Never, me dear; I didn't want to."

"They were a fierce and lawless people living in Jamaica," said Vivienne; "and they fought the English and would not submit till they heard that they were to be hunted with dogs. Then they gave in and were transported here. They disliked Nova Scotia because they said there were no yams nor cocoanuts and bananas growing here, and no wild hogs to hunt; and the men couldn't have as many wives as they chose, nor have cock-fighting; so the government sent them all to Africa; all but the parents of Mammy Juniper, and when they died she became a servant in this family."

"A fearsome body for a servant," said her hearer; "aren't you terrified of her, me dear?"

"No," said Vivienne; "she is more afraid of me than I am of her. I am sorry for her."

"Don't talk about her, me child," said Mrs. Macartney with a shudder. "Talk about yourself. Aren't you shamming ill with that rosy face?"

"I'm not ill," said Vivienne lightly. "This is only a feverish cold; but Dr. Camperdown won't let me go downstairs."

"I was determined to see you," said Mrs. Macartney, pulling Vivienne beside her to the sofa. "I thickened the air with hints that I'd like to come up, but Mrs. Colonibel tried to frighten me with tales of the badness of your cold."

"She doesn't like me to have callers up here, for some reason," said Vivienne.

"She likes to be contrary, me dear. 'Tis the breath of life to her, and maybe she's jealous of your handsome room"—looking admiringly about her—"which is the most elegant of the house. Your whites and golds don't slap me in the face like the colors downstairs. That's the lady of the mansion's good pleasure, I suppose. Ah, but she is a fine woman!"

The inimitable toss of her head as she pronounced this praise of Mrs. Colonibel and the waggish roll of her eyes to the ceiling made Vivienne press her handkerchief to her lips to keep from laughter that she feared might reach Judy's ears.

"I wish you could have seen her ladyship yester-

day when she came to invite us to this dinner, me dear," said Mrs. Macartney with a twisting of her mouth. "The boy at the hotel brought up her card —Mrs. Colonibel. 'That's the Lady Proudface,' said I, and I went to the drawing room ; and there she stood, and rushed at me like this——" and Mrs. Macartney rising from the sofa charged heavily across the room at an unoffending table which staggered on its legs at her onset.

Vivienne half started from her seat then fell back again laughing spasmodically. "Me dear," said Mrs. Macartney looking over her shoulder at her, "she thought to make up by the warmth of her second greeting for the coldness of her first. She said she wanted us all to come and dine *en famille*, to celebrate the engagement, so I thought I'd tease her and talk French too ; so I said, 'Wouldn't we be *de trop?* and you mustn't suppose we belonged to the *élite* of the world, for we were plain people and didn't care a rap for the opinion of the *beau monde*.' You should have seen her face! And then I took pity on her and said we'd come. And come we did ; and I'd give a kingdom if you could see Patrick and Geoffrey. They're sitting beside Mrs. Colonibel, bowing and smirking at everything she says, and she's thinking she's mighty entertaining, and when we get home they'll both growl and say they were bored to death, and why didn't I tell them you weren't to be present. Me dear, I didn't

dare to," in a stage whisper, and looking over her shoulder. "They'd never have come."

"Is Mrs. Colonibel not at all embarrassed with you?" said Vivienne. "She was not polite to you the other day, though of course it was on my account, not on yours."

"Embarrassed, did you say, me dear?" replied Mrs. Macartney gayly. "Faith, there's no such word in society. You must keep a bold front, whatever you do, or you'll get the gossips after you. Dip your tongue in honey or gall, whichever you like, and hold your head high, and there's no such thing as quailing before the face of mortal man or woman. Drop your head on your breast and go through the world, and you'll have the fingers pointed at you. Me Lady Proudface is the woman to get on. If you'd seen the way she took the news of your engagement you'd have fallen at her feet in admiration."

"She suppressed her disapproval," said Vivienne.

"Disapproval, me child. 'Twas like salt to her eyeballs; but she never winked. Hasn't she said anything to you about it?"

"No; we rarely have any conversations."

"Ah, she'd have but a limited supply of compliments left after her flowery words to me. By the way, did you get the grand bouquet that Geoffrey sent to you?"

"Yes; it is over there by the window."

"He's desolated not to see you, as the French people say; but hist, me dear, there's some one at the door. Maybe it's her ladyship. I'll go into this adjacent room."

"No, no; stay here," exclaimed Vivienne with an apprehensive glance at the narrow doorway leading to her sleeping apartment. "It does not matter who comes."

"It's only I," said a meek voice, and Dr. Camperdown's sandy head appeared, shortly followed by the rest of his body.

Mrs. Macartney, not heeding Vivienne's advice, had tried to enter the next room, and had become firmly wedged in the doorway. Dr. Camperdown was obliged to go to her assistance, and when he succeeded in releasing her she looked at him with such a variety of amusing expressions chasing themselves over her face that he grinned broadly and turned away.

"Who is this gentleman?" said Mrs. Macartney at last breathlessly, with gratitude, and yet with a certain repugnance to the physician on account of his ugly looks.

Vivienne performed the necessary introduction, and Mrs. Macartney ejaculated, "Ah, your doctor. Perhaps," jocularly, "I may offer myself to him as a patient." Then as Dr. Camperdown took Vivienne's wrist in his hand she bent over him with an interested air and said, "It's me flesh, doctor. I

don't know what to do about it. The heavens seem to rain it down upon me—flake upon flake, layer upon layer. I've been rubbed and tubbed, and grilled and stewed, and done Banting, and taken Anti-fats, and yet it goes on increasing. Every morning there's more of it, and every evening it grows upon me. I have to swing and tumble and surge about me bed to get impetus enough to roll out; it's awful, doctor!"

Vivienne listened to her in some surprise, for up to this she had not imagined that Mrs. Macartney felt the slightest uneasiness in regard to her encumbrance of flesh. But there was real anxiety in her tones now, and Vivienne listened with interest for the doctor's reply.

"What do you eat?" he said abruptly, and with a swift glance at her smooth, fair expanse of cheek and chin.

"Three fairish meals a day," she said, "and a supper at night."

"How much do you walk?"

"Sure, I never walk at all if I can get a carriage."

He laughed shortly, and said nothing.

"What do you think about it, doctor—is it a dangerous case?" said Mrs. Macartney, twisting her head so that she could look at his face as he bent over his work. Vivienne saw that she was immensely impressed by his oracular manner of delivering himself.

"Do you want me to prescribe for you?" he asked, straightening himself with a suddenness that made his prospective patient start nervously.

"Ah, yes, doctor, please," she said.

"Begin then by dropping the supper, avoid fats, sweets, anything starchy. Walk till you are ready to drop; heart's all right is it?"

"Ah, yes," pathetically, and with a flicker of her customary waggishness, "my heart's always been my strong point, doctor."

"Report to me at my office," he went on; "come in a week."

She shuffled to her feet, her face considerably brighter. "You've laid me under an obligation, doctor. If you'll make me a shadow smaller, I'll pray for the peace of your soul. And now I must go, me dear," she said, looking at Vivienne, "or I'll be missed from the drawing room. I crept away you know."

Vivienne smiled. Mrs. Colonibel had probably watched her climbing the staircase.

"I must go too," said Dr. Camperdown, rising as Mrs. Macartney left the room. "You'll be all right in a day or two, Miss Delavigne. Mind, we're to be friends."

Vivienne looked up gratefully into his sharp gray eyes. "You are very good to come and see me."

"Armour asked me to," he said shortly.

"Judy told him that I was ill," said Vivienne.

"I scolded her a little, because I did not think I really needed a doctor."

"You are a proud little thing," he remarked abruptly.

Vivienne's black eyes sought his face in some surprise.

"You can't get on in this world without help," he continued. "Be kind to other people and let others be kind to you. How do you and Mrs. Colonibel agree?"

"Passably."

"Don't give in to her too much," he said. "A snub does some people more good than a sermon. Good-night," and he disappeared abruptly.

CHAPTER XII

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

VIVIENNE and Judy were having afternoon tea in their room, when the lame girl, who was amusing herself by twirling round and round on the piano stool while she ate her bread and butter, burst into a cackling laugh. "Oh, Vivienne, mamma said such a hateful thing about you—so hateful that I must tell you."

Vivienne laid her head on her chair back and calmly looked at her.

"She said," went on Judy with a chuckle, "she said, 'Throw a handkerchief over her head and you will see the peasant.'"

Vivienne's eyes glittered as they went back to the fire, and Judy continued, "It was such a detestable thing to say, because she knows that you are more like a princess than a peasant. Fancy comparing you to one of the Frenchwomen that one sees down in the market."

Vivienne made no reply to her, and Judy went on talking and grumbling to herself until she heard footsteps in the hall outside.

"Who is that coming up here?" she said, peering

through the half-open door. "As I am a miserable gossip, it's Stargarde at last, the mysterious Stargarde, about whom your serene highness is so curious."

Vivienne rose and gazed straight before her in polite fascination. Mr. Armour stood in the doorway, and behind him was a magnificently developed woman who might be any age between twenty-five and thirty. She held her cap in her hand, and the little curls in her masses of golden hair shone round about her head like an aureole. A mantle muffled the upper part of her figure, but Vivienne caught a glimpse of a neck like marble and exquisitely molded hands.

The girl as she stood criticising her visitor did not know that there was anything wistful in her attitude, she had not the remotest idea of bidding for sympathy ; therefore it was with the utmost surprise that she saw Stargarde's arms outstretched, and the mantle spreading out like a cloud and descending upon her.

"Poor little girl—shut up in the house this lovely weather," and other compassionate sentences she heard as she went into the cloud and was enveloped by it.

When she emerged, shaking her head and putting up her hands to her coils of black hair to feel that they were not disarranged, Stargarde was smiling at her.

"Did I startle you? Forgive me, I was too demonstrative; but do you know, I fell in love with you before I saw you?"

"Did you?" responded Vivienne, then turning to Mr. Armour, who was loitering about the door as if uncertain whether to come in or not, she invited him to sit down.

"Is your cold any better?" he asked stiffly as he came in.

"Yes, thank you," she replied. "Dr. Camperdown is driving it away."

"Stanton," exclaimed Vivienne's beautiful visitor, flashing a smile at him, "why don't you introduce me?"

"I thought it scarcely necessary," he said, his glance brightening as he turned from Vivienne to her, "after the warmth of your greeting. Yet, if you wish it—this, Miss Delavigne, is our friend Miss Stargarde Turner——"

"Of Rockland Street," she added gravely.

Vivienne tried to hide her astonishment. This woman looked like an aristocrat. Could it be that she lived in one of the worst streets of the city?

Stargarde smiled as if reading her thoughts. "It isn't so bad as you think," she said consolingly. "Wait till you see it." Then she turned to reply to a sharply interjected question by Judy.

While her attention was distracted from her, Vivienne's glance wandered in quiet appreciation

over the classic profile and statuesque figure of her guest as she sat slightly bent forward with hands clasped over her knees, her loose draperies encircling her and making her look like one of the Greek statues, rows and rows of which the girl had seen in foreign art galleries.

Who was she? What was she? And how did it happen that she had the extraordinary strength of mind to dress and comport herself so differently from the ordinary woman of the world? There was about her also a radiance that she had never before seen in the face of any human being. She did not understand then as she did later on that it was the spirit of love that glorified Stargarde Turner's face. Her great heart beat only for others. She was so permeated and suffused with a sweet charity toward all men that it shone constantly out of every line of her beautiful countenance.

Vivienne's eyes went from Stargarde to Mr. Armour. He had a wonderful amount of self-control, yet he could not hide the fact that he admired this charming woman, that he listened intently to every word that fell from her lips.

"I am glad that there is some one he is interested in," thought Vivienne. "Usually he seems like a man of stone, not of flesh and blood."

It occurred to her that he had brought Miss Turner up to her room that he might have a chance to listen, without interruption, to the clear, sweet

tones of her voice. She imagined that he was in love with her and that his family threw obstacles in the way of their meeting. In this she made a mistake as she soon found out. Stanton Armour was at liberty to pay Miss Turner all the attention he chose, and the whole family welcomed her as an honored guest.

"You and I are going to be friends," said Stargarde turning to her suddenly. "I feel it."

"I hope so," murmured Vivienne.

"Will you have some tea, Israelitess without guile?" asked Judy abruptly flinging an arm over Stargarde's shoulder.

"Yes, dear," and Stargarde turned her face toward her. "Why don't you come to see me?"

"Oh, you worry me with your goodness and perfections," was the impatient retort. "You're too faultless for ordinary purposes. I get on better with that young lady there, who is good but human."

"Have you found some faults in Miss Delavigne already?" asked Stargarde gleefully.

"Yes, plenty of them," said Judy reaching down to the hearth for the teapot.

"What are they?" asked Mr. Armour soberly,

"I haven't time to tell you all now," said Judy. "Come up some day when I'm alone and I'll go over them. You needn't smile, Vivienne, I will. What have you been doing with yourself lately, Stargarde? We haven't seen you for an age."

"I've been in the country finding homes for some of my children,"

"This young person hasn't the good fortune to be married," said Judy to Vivienne; "and by children she means orphans and starvelings that she amuses herself by picking out of gutters."

"I hope that you will be interested in my work," said Stargarde enthusiastically to Vivienne.

"No, she won't," said Judy. "That sort of thing isn't in her line."

"Judy," said Mr. Armour, "it seems to me that you are monopolizing the conversation. Suppose you come over to this window seat and talk to me for a while?"

She followed him obediently, and after they were seated burst out with a brisk, "Thank heaven for family privileges! You wouldn't have dared say that to a stranger."

"No," he said, "I don't suppose I would."

"You're pretty plain-spoken though with everybody," said Judy critically; "that is, when you want your own way. When you don't you let people alone. Why are you in such a good temper to-day? Have you been making some money?"

"A little."

"That's all you care for, isn't it?" pursued the girl.

"What do you mean?" he asked, a slight cloud on his face.

"Money is your god," she said coolly.

He made no reply to her and she went on, "What a pity that you have never married like other men. You're almost forty, aren't you?"

"Almost."

"Just Brian's Camperdown's age; only there is this difference between you, he would get married if he could, and you could if you would. I know some one that would have made a nice, proud wife for you."

"Judy," he exclaimed, holding himself a little straighter than he usually did, "what are you talking about?"

"Something that you might have done if you had been as sensible as some people."

"You are impertinent," he said angrily.

"This is a long room, and we are some distance from the fireplace," said Judy in velvet tones, "yet if you raise your voice our two darlings yonder will hear what you are saying."

Mr. Armour gave her an annoyed glance.

"It isn't worth your while to quarrel with me," said Judy smoothly, "the only person in the house that can get on with you. And what have I done? Merely hinted that a charming girl of twenty-one would have done a pretty thing to sacrifice herself to an old bachelor of forty. You ought to feel flattered."

"I don't," he returned sullenly.

"No; because you are a—a—because you are foolish. You ought to feel willing to pay six thousand dollars a year to some one who would make you laugh."

"What has that to do with Miss Delavigne?" he said.

"Why she amuses you—can't you see it?—you, a regular grum-growdy of a man, with care sitting forever on your brow."

"Judy," he said, "your chatter wearies me."

"I daresay," she replied; "it shows you ought to have more of it. You'll probably go mad some day from business worries."

Mr. Armour picked up a book that he found on the window seat and began to read it, while Judy turned her back on him and stared out at the peaceful waters of the Arm.

Stargarde was looking earnestly into Vivienne's face. "You dear child! if I had known you were ill I would have come to you sooner."

"I have not suffered extremely," said Vivienne gratefully, yet with dignity.

Stargarde shook her head gently. "Do you care to tell me how you get on with Mrs. Colonibel?"

"We rarely come in contact," said Vivienne; "we have nothing in common."

"You do not like her," said Stargarde sadly; "I know you do not; yet have patience with her, my child. There is a woman who has lived half her

life and has not learned its lesson yet. She cannot bear to be contra—opposed ; she will have her own way."

Some hidden emotion caused Stargarde's face to contract painfully, and Vivienne seeing it said generously, "Let us make some excuse for her. She has reigned here for some years, has she not?"

"Yes ; ever since her husband died."

"And she is jealous of all interference?"

"Yes ; and she looks upon you as a usurper. Be as patient as you can with her, dear child, for she thinks that Stanton's object in bringing you here is to make you mistress over her head."

"Do you mean that I should become the housekeeper here?"

"Yes ; I do."

Vivienne started. "Oh, I am only here for a short time ; I could not think of remaining."

Stargarde looked at her affectionately and with some curiosity, and seeing this the girl went on hastily, "Mrs. Colonibel's husband is dead, is he not?"

"Yes ; he was much older than she was."

"And her stay here depends upon her cousin, Mr. Armour?"

"Yes ; he gives her a handsome salary."

"It is rather surprising then that she does not try to please him in every respect."

Stargarde's eyes lighted up with brilliant indig-

nation. "You bring me to one of my hobbies," she exclaimed. "I think that if there is one class of people on whom the wrath of God rests more heavily than on others, it is on the good Christian people who, wrapped around in their own virtues, bring up their children in an atmosphere of pagan idolatry. In not one single particle is the child taught to control itself. The very moon and stars would be plucked from the sky if the parent had the power to gratify the child in that way. Nothing, nothing is denied it. And what happens? The parent dies, the child with its shameless disregard of the rights of others is let loose in the world. With what disastrous results we see in the case of Flora Colonibel. Oh, pity her, pity her, my child," and Stargarde gazed imploringly at Vivienne, her blue eyes dimmed with tears.

Vivienne witnessed Stargarde's emotion with a kind of awe, and by a gentle glance essayed to comfort her. The woman smiled through her tears, held up her golden head bravely, like a child that has accomplished its season of mourning and is willing to be cheerful, and said steadily: "I rarely discuss Flora—it is too painful a subject—but you are gentle and good; I wish to enlist your sympathies in her favor. You understand?"

"I will try to like her," said Vivienne with great simplicity, "for your sake."

"Dear child," murmured Stargarde, "to do some-

thing for others is the way to forget one's own trouble."

Vivienne assented to this remark by a smile, and Stargarde fixing her eyes on the fire fell into a brown study. After a time she turned her head with one of her swift, graceful movements, and reading Vivienne's thoughts with a readiness that rather disconcerted her, said: "You wish to know something about me, don't you?"

"Yes," said the girl frankly.

"Good, as Dr. Camperdown says," replied Stargarde. "I will tell you all that I can. First, I spent the first twelve years of my life as the eldest daughter of a poor parson and his wife. What do you think of that?"

"It is easy to imagine that your descent might be clerical," said Vivienne innocently.

Stargarde laughed at this with such suppressed amusement that Vivienne knew she must have some *arrière pensée.* "They were not my real parents," said her new friend at last.

"Indeed," said Vivienne, measuring her with a glance so pitying that Stargarde hastened to say, "What does it matter? They loved me better I think for being a waif. The Lord knows all about it, so it is all right. You want to know who my parents are, don't you?"

"Yes; but do not tell me unless you care to do so."

"I can't tell you, child," said Stargarde, gently pinching her cheek. "I will not say that I do not know; I will simply say that I prefer not to tell anything I may know. Would it make any difference to you if I were to tell you that my father had been—well, say a public executioner?"

"I do not know; I cannot tell," said Vivienne in bewilderment. "I could never imagine that you would spring from such a source as that."

"Suppose I did; you would not punish the child for the father's dreadful calling, would you?"

"Most persons would."

"Yes, they would," said Stargarde. "We punish the children for the sins of the fathers, and we are always pointing our fingers at our neighbors and saying, 'I am better than thou,' as regards lineage. And yet, in the beginning we were all alike.

'When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?' "

"That was years ago," said Vivienne in amusement; "blood trickling through the veins of generations has become blue."

"My dear, we go up and down. The aristocrats of to-day are the paupers of to-morrow, except in rare instances. I do not think any the more of you for a possible existence in your veins of a diluted drop of the blood royal of France. I can understand your sentiment in regard to it, if you say, 'I

must never commit a mean action because I come of a line of distinguished ancestry' ; though I think a better sentiment is, 'Here I stand as noble in the sight of God as any creature of earth ; I owe it to him and to myself to keep my record clean.' "

An alarming suspicion crept into Vivienne's mind. "Are you an anarchist?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, no, no," laughed Stargarde ; "a socialist if you will, in the broad sense of the term, a Christian socialist ; but an anarchist never."

"Are you a loyal subject to the Queen?"

Stargarde bent her beautiful head. "I am, God bless her! Not loyalty alone do I give her, but tender love and reverence. May all her descendants rule as wisely as she has done."

Stargarde when she spoke used as many gestures as Vivienne herself. Then she was brimful of personal magnetism, catching her hearers by the electric brilliance of her bright blue eyes and holding them by the pure and silvery tones of her voice. Vivienne felt her blood stir in her veins as she listened to her. She was loth to have her visitor go, and as she saw her glance at the clock she said hurriedly, "We have wandered from the subject of your up-bringing."

"Come and see me in my rooms," said Stargarde rising, "and I will tell you all about myself and how I went to live with the Camperdowns when I

was twelve. They are all gone now but Brian," and she sighed. "How I miss them! Family life is such an exquisite thing. You, poor child, know little of it as yet. Some day you will marry and have a home of your own. You have a lover now, little girl, haven't you?" and she tilted back Vivienne's head and looked searchingly into her eyes.

"Yes," said Vivienne gently.

Stargarde smiled. "Before he takes you away I wish you would come and stay with me for a long time. Now I must fly, I have an appointment at six."

"Good-bye, Miss Turner," murmured Vivienne, as her caller took her by the hand.

"Good-bye, Stargarde," corrected her friend.

"Stargarde—it is a beautiful name," said the girl.

"It is a great worry to people; they ask me why I was so named, and I never can tell them. I only know that it is German, and is occasionally used in Russia."

"Are you going? are you going?" called Judy, limping briskly from the other end of the room. "Wait a minute. I want to show you some clothes that I will give you for your poor children."

"I haven't time, I fear."

"I will send you home in a sleigh," said Mr. Armour, strolling toward them.

"Oh, in that case I can give you a few minutes," said Stargarde.

"This is what we might call a case of love at first sight, isn't it?" said Judy, fluttering like a kindly disposed blackbird between Vivienne and Stargarde.

Stargarde laughed merrily as she went into the bedroom.

Vivienne was left behind with Mr. Armour. Ever since her interview in the library with him he had regarded her with some friendliness and with decided curiosity. Now he asked with interest,

"Did you ever see any one like Miss Turner?"

"No," said Vivienne warmly, "never; she is so devoted, so enthusiastic; her *protégés* must love her."

"They do," he said dryly.

"It is not my way to plunge into sudden intimacies," said Vivienne with a little proud movement of her neck; "yet with Miss Turner I fancy all rules are set aside."

"She is certainly unconventional," said Mr. Armour.

"I wish I were like that," said Vivienne. "I wish that I had it in me to live for others."

"You have a different mission in life," he said. "You are cut out for a leader in society rather than a religious or philanthropic enthusiast. By the way, Macartney wants your marriage to take place as soon as possible. Of course you concur in his opinion."

"Yes," said Vivienne absently, "I will agree to

anything that he arranges. As I told you the other day," she went on with some embarrassment, "I think it is advisable for me to leave here as soon as possible. However, I spoke too abruptly to you. I have been wishing for an opportunity to tell you so."

"Have you?" he said, twisting the corners of his moustache and trying not to smile at the lofty manner in which she delivered her apology. "It really did not matter."

"No, I dare say not," she replied with a quick glance at him; "but I was not polite."

"I mean it did not matter about me," he said. "A business man must get used to knocks of various kinds."

How conceited he was, how proud of his business ability! Vivienne shrugged her shoulders and said nothing.

"About this engagement of yours," he went on; "if you please we will allow its length to remain undetermined for a time. I may as well confess that I brought you here for a purpose. What that purpose is I do not care to tell, and I beg that you will not speculate about it. Do you think that you can make up your mind to remain under my roof for a few weeks longer?"

"I wounded his self-love so deeply that he will never recover from it," said the girl to herself. Then she went on aloud in a constrained voice.

"It is scarcely necessary for you to ask me that question. To stay here for as long a time as you choose is a small favor for me to grant when you have been kind enough to take care of me for so many years."

"Ah thank you," said Mr. Armour aloud. To himself he added, "Proud, passionate, restless girl. She will never forgive me for not liking her. She has her father's face and her mother's disposition."

CHAPTER XIII

DR. CAMPERDOWN MAKES A MORNING CALL

OLD Polypharmacy, Dr. Camperdown's horse, attached to a sleigh, was pegging slowly out one of the Arm roads on the day after his master's visit to Vivienne.

The afternoon was fine and brilliantly sunny, and Polypharmacy unharried by a check-rein, and almost happy for once that he had blinders on, kept his head down and his eyes half shut, on account of the dazzling glare of the sun on the white fields of snow.

If Polypharmacy was half asleep, his master was certainly very wide awake. He sat in a stooping attitude, his body responding to the bumps and jerks of the little open sleigh bobbing over the hillocks of snow, and his keen, bright eyes going like an eagle's over in the direction of Pinewood. When they reached the sullen, dark semicircle of evergreen surrounding it, he slapped the reins smartly over the back of his lazy quadruped, and ejaculated: "Hie on, Polypharmacy, and hear my programme—to have my delayed conversation with my lady and get back to town by five. Now comport yourself accordingly."

Polypharmacy, with a disapproving toss of his head at his master's haste, yet thought it better to quicken his pace and was soon trotting through the lodge gateway and up the drive to the house.

Arrived in front of the hall door, Camperdown sprang out of the sleigh and attaching a weight to the head of his horse rang a smart peal on the bell that brought a maid tripping to the door.

"I want to see Mrs. Colonibel," he said in his usual lordly fashion and striding past her into the house. "Is she at home?"

The girl clung to the door handle. "No, sir, she isn't at home—that is, she doesn't want to see any one."

"She'll see me," he said. "Take me to her."

Mrs. Colonibel unaware of the visit in store for her, had after lunch donned a dressing-gown of her favorite shade of red, had put on a pair of bedroom slippers and had made her way to the smoking-room, an apartment that was unoccupied at that time of day.

It was a constant source of chagrin to her that she had neither a maid of her own nor a boudoir. A number of times she had hinted to her cousin Stanton the desirability of bestowing on her these privileges, but so far he had listened in unresponsive silence. Of the delight that would fill her soul could she but speak of "my maid" and "my boudoir" while engaging in conversation with her

friends, that unsympathetic man had not the slightest idea.

With brows drawn together she looked discontentedly about the little room, which however, had a certain gaudy comfort of its own. A wood fire was burning merrily in the grate, a big easy-chair by the window held out inviting arms toward her. She had been at a sleighing party the evening before and was tired, and she had a novel and a box of sweets with which to console herself; so at last she sighed contentedly and subsiding among soft cushions was soon deep in a tale of love and sorrow.

At one of the most harrowing passages in the story, where the heroine involved in a hundred embarrassments sees no chance of escape and where her sad condition compelled Mrs. Colonibel to apply her handkerchief to her eyes, she was startled by hearing in a deep voice,

"But Black Donald sat in his coffin and ate oat cake."

Dropping her book she saw Dr. Camperdown hugging himself like a huge bear before the fire. "Good afternoon," he said; "I met that new domestic of yours in the hall and asked her name. She said it was Gregory. Every letter of that name is full of blood to me Shall I tell you why?"

"If you like," said Mrs. Colonibel with an unamiability that affected him not in the least.

"When I was a boy I used to visit at my uncle's in Yarmouth county. A man called Black Donald Gregory murdered his sister and cousin in a quarrel, and the whole country rang with the story. The sheriff took Black Donald to Yarmouth town to be hanged. On the road the sheriff would say, 'Black Donald, you have only twelve hours to live'; and Black Donald would sit in his coffin eating oat cake and saying nothing. The sheriff would say further, 'Black Donald you have only eleven hours to live.' But Black Donald sat in his coffin eating oat cake all the way to Yarmouth town. The sheriff warned him every hour, but Black Donald ate oat cake to the last, cramming a bit in his mouth as he mounted the scaffold. Queer story, isn't it? It used to make my blood run cold. Don't mind it now."

Flora shuddered, and without answering him picked up her book as a hint to him to be gone. To her secret dismay he appeared to be just in the humor for a gossip, and as he warmed his back at the fire said agreeably,

"What's that book you're in such a hurry to get back to?"

Mrs. Colonibel reluctantly mentioned the name of the story.

"Been crying over it, haven't you?" he asked. "Wasting tears over a silly jade that never existed, and over a nice girl that does exist and does suffer

you'll bestow not a word of sympathy. You women are queer creatures."

"Not a bit queerer than men," said Mrs. Colonibel, goaded into a response.

"Yes, you are," he retorted. "For double-twistedness and mixed motives and general incomprehensibility, commend me to women; and you're unbusinesslike, the most of you. You, Flora Colonibel, are now acting dead against your own interests. What makes you so hateful to that little French girl?"

Mrs. Colonibel moved uneasily about on her cushions. "She isn't little," she said; "she is as tall as I am."

"What makes you so hateful to her?" he said relentlessly.

"You should not talk in that way to me, Brian," said Mrs. Colonibel in an aggrieved tone of voice. "I'm not hateful to her."

"Yes, you are; you know you are,—hateful and spiteful in little feminine ways. You think people don't notice it; they do."

Mrs. Colonibel was a little frightened. "What do you mean, Brian?"

"Simply this. You have a young and fascinating girl under your roof. You suppress her in spite of the fact that she will soon be a married woman and in a position to lord it over you. People are talking about it already."

"That wretched Irish woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Colonibel; "I wish that she had been born without a tongue."

"Don't be abusive and vulgar, Flora. Once you get that reputation there isn't a man in Halifax that will marry you. You know your ambition is to get a husband; but you're playing a very bad game just now, a very bad one."

At this bit of information, of which his victim was only too well assured by her own inner consciousness, she began to shed tears of anger and mortification.

"Don't cry," said Camperdown soothingly, drawing up a chair and sitting astride it within easy reach of the box of sweetmeats on her lap, "and don't bite your handkerchief."

She would have given the world to be alone, but she was obliged to sit still, answering his questions and watching him coolly eat her sweets.

"Confide in me, Flora," he said kindly; "I'm the best friend you have. Tell me just how you feel toward Miss Delavigne."

"I hate her," she said, striking her teeth together and tearing her handkerchief to shreds. "You've no idea how I hate her, Brian," and she burst into violent sobbing.

She had thrown off all disguise, as indeed she was often in the habit of doing with him, for he understood her so well that she never could deceive

him and knew that she gained nothing by attempting to do so.

"That's right," he said, stripping the paper off a caramel and transferring it to his cheek. "Unburden your conscience; you'll feel better. We'll start from that. You hate her. People will hate each other; you can't help it. Now let us consider the subject without any appeal to higher motives, which would only be an embarrassment in your case, Flora. You can't help hating her; do you hate yourself?"

"No," indignantly, "you know I don't."

"No," he repeated in accents of blandishment; "out of all the world the person set up for your love and adoration is Flora Colonibel. Now in hating Miss Delavigne, and in showing that you hate her, are you doing Flora Colonibel good service?"

He would not proceed till she answered him, so at last she vouchsafed him a sulky, "No."

"You're working right against Flora Colonibel," he said. "You're blasting her prospects for worldly advancement; you're preparing her for an old age spent in a garret."

Mrs. Colonibel shivered at the prospect held out before her, but said nothing.

"What's your income apart from what Stanton gives you?" he asked.

"Five hundred dollars a year," reluctantly.

"Five hundred to a woman of your expensive

tastes! How much was that embroidered toga you have on?"

"Thirty dollars."

"And your sandals, or whatever they are?"

"Three."

"And the book?"

"Fifty cents."

"The ring on your finger?"

"Fifty dollars."

"That is eighty-three dollars and fifty cents. And you and Judy expect to live on five hundred." Throwing the empty confectionery box into the fire, he rose as if, in intense disapproval of her plans for the future, he could no longer stay with her.

Mrs. Colonibel was in a state bordering on hysterics. "What shall I do, Brian?" she gasped, holding him convulsively.

"Mend your ways and increase your graces," succinctly. "Stop nagging Stanton, or he'll turn you out of the house before you're a twelvemonth older. Treat ma'm'selle decently, and follow Stanton's lead in everything. He is your employer. He doesn't love you overmuch, but he'll not be a hard one. Good-bye." And gently pulling his coat from her quivering hand, he sauntered from the room, muttering to himself, "Medicine's bitter, but it's better for her to take it."

Going on his way down the staircase he crossed the lower hall and looked into the drawing room.

Its only occupant was Valentine, who lay stretched out at length on a sofa reading a book which he closed when he saw Camperdown.

"Beastly cold day, isn't it?" he asked, putting his hands under his handsome, graceless head to prop it still higher.

"Depends upon your standpoint," said Camperdown drily. "Where's Stanton?"

"In town—in his office, I suppose."

"Why aren't you there?"

"Oh, I've about cut the office. Stanton doesn't make me very welcome when I do go."

"You're of no use to him, probably."

"Well, I don't adore bookkeeping," frankly; "and Stanton lets me take no responsibility in buying or selling."

"Suppose he should die, also your father, do you think you could carry on the business?"

"Couldn't I!" said Valentine, with all of a young man's sublime confidence in his own capabilities.

"I'd like to see you do it," grimly. "Things would go 'ker-smash,' as old Hannah says. What are you improving you mind with on this glorious day? A literary family, forsooth."

Valentine Armour, who with all his faults was as sunny-tempered as a child, refused to tell him, and from mischievous motives solely, tried to roll over on his book. He succeeded in getting it under him, and lay on it laughing convulsively. He was

slight and tall of figure, but his strength was as nothing against the prodigious power that lay in Camperdown's limbs when he chose to exert himself.

Shaking Valentine like a rat, he lifted him with one hand by the waistband, and dropped him on the hearth rug, where the young man sat nursing his crossed legs, and convulsed with laughter at the various expressions of disgust chasing themselves over the physician's plain-featured countenance.

"Too steep for you, eh, Brian?" he said teasingly.

"Erotic trash!" was the reply. "'He crushed her in his arms'—reading from the book—'and smothered her with kisses, till terrified at his passion she was——' Bah! I'll read no more. You young men read this amatory rubbish and say, 'That sounds lively,' and look around for some one to practise on. Why don't you fill your mind with something solid while you're young. Do you think you are going to limp around into driveling old age looking for some one to crush to your breast? If you cram your mind with this stuff now, it's all you'll have when your gray hairs come. You're a fool, Valentine. Work is the main business of life —making love an incident. I've had my eye on you for some time. You have things reversed."

"Thank you," gayly. "Don't you ever read novels?"

"Of course I do. Good novels have a mission. Many a one preaches a sermon to people that never listen to a minister; but this trash"— scornfully— "into the fire with it!" and he tossed the book among the coals in the grate.

"Peace to its ashes," said Valentine, stifling a yawn. "It was a slow thing, anyway."

"Come drive to town with me," said Camperdown.

"Can't; I'm tired. I was skating all the morning. I think I'll go and ask Judy for a cup of tea."

"Is ma'm'selle civil to you?" asked Camperdown.

"Pretty much so. I'm trying to get up a flirtation with her, but she's too high and mighty to flirt, though she could very well do it if she tried."

"I'm glad there's one girl that doesn't worship your doll face."

"That she won't flirt with me is no sign that she doesn't," said Valentine saucily. "Go to your patients, Camperdown, and leave the girls to me.

> "His pills as thick as hand grenades flew,
> And where they fell as certainly they slew."

Camperdown threw a sofa cushion at him, but Valentine dodged it, and placing himself comfortably by the fire watched lazily through the window the energetic manner in which the friend of his family jumped into his sleigh and drove away.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STOLEN POCKET-BOOK

EARLY one evening Stargarde was sitting sewing in her room when she heard on the veranda the blustering noise that usually accompanied Dr. Camperdown's arrival. She smiled and glanced apprehensively at Zeb, who had been spending the day with her, and who now lay on the sofa apparently asleep.

Then she dropped her work and turned to greet the newcomer.

"No, thank you, I can't sit down," he said. "I came to bring you some money that Mr. Warner handed me for your poor people. Here it is," and taking out his pocket-book he handed her a check. "You'd better spend some of it on that little mud-lark of yours," with a nod of his head in the direction of the sofa.

Zeb, who was only pretending to be asleep, heard the half-contemptuous half-good-natured epithet, and like a flash she was off the sofa and clinging to his arm, scratching, snarling, and biting at him like an enraged cat.

Stargarde was intensely distressed, and Dr. Cam-

perdown was electrified. Around and around the table he went, trying to shake the child off without hurting her, and yet becoming more and more disturbed as he heard the ripping of cloth.

"Stop, stop—you little fury," he exclaimed. "Let go! I'll have to hurt you, I see," and bending back the child's fingers in his powerful hands he dropped her on the floor gently, but as hastily as if she were a rat, and snatching at his hat hurried to the door.

He flung it open and rushed out, none too soon, however, for the child was at his heels. Across the veranda and out under the archway they dashed, and Stargarde, hastening to watch them, heard their hurrying footsteps echoing down the frosty street. Used to surprising scenes of all kinds she was not unduly alarmed, and thoughtfully smoothing out the check and murmuring, "Poor little Zeb," she sat down to write a note of thanks.

After some time there was a cautious knock at the door, then a head was thrust slowly in, which, to her surprise, she saw belonged to Dr. Camperdown.

"Are you alone?" he said. "Has that—that little witch come back? If she has I won't come in."

"No, she hasn't."

Camperdown advanced into the room making a wry face. "I have been robbed."

"Brian!"

"Yes; that small darling of yours has made off with my pocket-book."

"Impossible, Brian!" exclaimed Stargarde clasping her hands.

"Not so," he retorted coolly. "She has it. I was on my way to the police station, but changed my mind and thought I'd come here first."

"Brian, I cannot have her arrested."

"Very well; then get my property from her. There are papers in that book worth a large sum to me. I've traveled half over the world and carried a pocket full of notes here, there, and everywhere, and never was robbed before."

Stargarde suddenly became calm. "Sit down and let us talk it over."

He gave utterance to his favorite exclamation, "Good—there's considerable of the detective about you, Stargarde, and you've had experience with people of this stripe. Now what shall we do?"

She smiled feebly at him. "Where did you keep your pocket-book, Brian?"

He displayed a well of a pocket in his inside coat situated immediately over his brawny chest. "Impossible to fall out you see. Put your hand in."

"Oh, I can see; do you always keep it there?"

"Always."

"When did you have it last?"

"When I took it out to give you the check. I

had the book half-way back into my pocket when the young lamb sprang upon me. You remember how she grabbed and dived at me—wanted to tear her way to my heart, I think. Probably she snatched the book and concealed it among her rags."

She had no rags to conceal it among," said Stargarde reproachfully; "she had on a decent frock."

"Well, what is your theory?" he said impatiently.

"She was angry and thought only of punishing you. The book must have fallen from your coat as you ran and she picked it up and is keeping it to tease you."

"I will tease her," grimly, "if she doesn't give it up. Come, what shall we do? Get a policeman?"

"No, Brian, I will get it for you," and she left him and went into her bedroom and put her hand to her head with a swift ejaculation, "O Lord, give me wisdom. They are terrible people—her parents. If they find the book on her they will not give it up."

She looked around the room as if for inspiration. "I have it," she said, snatching a little box from her dressing table. "Thank God for putting it into the hearts of kind friends to send me the wherewithal to do good." Then taking a hat and cloak from a drawer, and rolling Zeb's cap and shawl in a parcel, she went out to Dr. Camperdown and said quietly, "I am ready."

He held open the door for her, and looked down approvingly at the large black dog that went silently out with his nose against her skirts.

They went up a street leading to the Citadel Hill, which crouched in the midst of the city like some huge animal turned stiff in the cold, its flanks covered with yellow, tufted, frozen grass, the great crown of the fort resting solidly on its brow. A few lights flashed at the top of the signal staff, but the grim fortification sunk in the ground was outwardly dark and gloomy, though within they knew there were lights and fires and soldiers keeping ceaseless watch.

Near the Citadel was a tenement house, inhabited by nearly twenty persons. Stargarde knew them all, knew just which rooms they occupied, and on arriving in front of the building, she refused to allow Camperdown to accompany her within.

Very unwillingly he consented to stay outside, a little comforted to see that the dog slunk in after her like her shadow. Stargarde had requested him not to linger by the door, so he walked up and down the opposite side of the street, where there were no houses, surveying moodily sometimes the frozen glacis on one side of him, and sometimes the gaudy windows of the little eating and drinking shops on the other. A few soldiers in great-coats passed at intervals up and down the street, but always across from him, and occasionally a man

or a gayly dressed girl would swing open a shop door and let a stream of music and a smell of cooking food out on the night air.

While he waited, he mourned angrily and bitterly, as he had done a thousand times before, the passion, or credulity, or madness, or whatever it was, that took his pure, white lily into such houses as these. "Those people are well enough off," he muttered angrily; "why can't she let them alone? They live their life, we live ours. She thinks she can raise them up. Pah! as easily as rats from a gutter."

He grumbled on mercifully unconscious of the fact that could he have seen Stargarde at the time his uneasiness would not have been allayed.

The old tenement house was one of the worst in the city, and when Stargarde entered it, she knew she must step cautiously. Passing through the doorway she found herself in a narrow, unlighted hall, not evil-smelling, for the door had been partly ajar, but as cold as the outer world, and with an uneven floorway, almost covered by an accumulation of ice and snow brought in during many days by many feet, and that would linger till a thaw came to melt it.

At the back of the hall was a sound of running water, where the occupants of the house, with a glorious disregard of the waste, kept their tap running to save it from freezing. Beyond the tap Star-

garde knew she must not go, for there was a large hole in the floor utilized as a receptacle for the refuse and garbage of the house, which were thrown through it into the cellar. As for the cellar itself, it was entirely open to the winter winds. The windows had been torn away, part of the foundation wall was crumbling, and over the rickety floor she could hear the rats scampering merrily, busy with their evening feast.

Stargarde avoided the icy sink, the running water, and the crazy steps that led to the cellar, and guiding herself along the hall by touching the wall with the tips of her outstretched fingers, put her foot on the lowest step of the staircase. Carefully she crept up one flight of stairs after another, past walls flecked with ugly sores, where the plaster had fallen off in patches, past empty sockets of windows staring out at the night with glass and sash both gone, and past the snowdrifts lying curled beneath on the floor.

On two flats she passed by doors where threads of light streamed out and lay across the rotten boards, while a sound of laughter and rough merry-making was heard within.

In the third, the top flat, there was no noise at all. "Foreigners they are, and queer in their ways," ejaculated Stargarde; and pausing an instant to listen for some sign of life, she lifted up her face to the crazy, moldy roof overhead, where some of

the shingles were gone, affording easy ingress to snow and rain, which kept the floor beneath her feet in a state of perpetual dampness.

"Iniquitous!" she murmured; "judgment falls on the city that neglects its poor." Then bringing down her glance to the doors before her, she sighed heavily and proceeded a little farther along the hall. There were three rooms in this story, and Zeb's parents lived in the front one. Their door had been broken in some quarrel between the people of the house, and one whole panel was gone. There was a garment clumsily tacked over it, and Stargarde might have pulled it aside if she had been so minded; but she had not come to spy upon her *protégés*, and contented herself with knocking gently.

The very slight, almost inaudible, sound of voices that she had been able to hear within the room instantly ceased; after a short interval a voice asked her in excellent English who she was and what she wanted.

"Miss Turner," she replied good-humoredly, "and I should like to see Zeb for a few minutes."

The door was opened part way, and she was sullenly motioned to enter by a tall woman, who slipped behind it so as to be partly unobserved, giving her visitor as she did so a look which certainly would have attracted Stargarde's attention could she have seen it, so blended with a curious variety of emotions was it.

They were having a quiet carousal Stargarde saw, when she found herself in the room. There was a tearing fire in the stove, and on its red-hot top foamed and bubbled a kettle of boiling water. The windows were tightly closed and draped with dirty garments; a small table, having on it candles, a pack of cards, and a jug of steaming liquor, stood at one side of the room, and beside it sat two men, both foreigners, judging by their swarthy faces and plentiful supply of silky, black hair.

They were very drunk, but the woman was only partly so. The men eyed Stargarde in insulting, brutish curiosity, hurling interjections, remarks, and questions at her in a gibberish which she fortunately could not understand.

She paid little attention to them. Her eyes leaped beyond to the dirty bed on the floor, and held a pair of glittering orbs that she knew belonged to the child of whom she had come in search. She did not wish Zeb to have one instant to herself in which to secrete the pocket-book. The child had pulled about her some of the rags with which she was surrounded, and was sitting up, looking like a wild animal disturbed in its lair.

Stargarde crossed the room quickly and knelt down beside her. "You ran away from me this evening," she whispered; "see, darling," and opening a box she showed the child a layer of sweetmeats daintily wrapped in colored paper.

"Take one, Zeb," she said, and the child silently submitted to have one put in her mouth. "Now I must go," said Stargarde; "you keep this pretty box, and will you come and see me to-morrow?"

"Mebbe," said the child sullenly, and taking another sweetmeat.

Stargarde's heart beat fast. The girl was an enigma to her in her moody self-possession. Perhaps she had not taken the pocket-book. "Good-bye, Zeb," she murmured, making as though she would rise from the floor. "Have you no present for me? I thought you might have."

Zeb flashed her a look, half cunning, half admiring. "You're a quaint one," she observed in Italian *patois;* then she displayed her sharp, white teeth in a mirthless smile: "If you'll give me a kiss."

Stargarde leaned over and took the child in a capacious embrace, and as she did so, felt something flat slipped into the bosom of her dress. "Is it all there?" she murmured in Zeb's ear; "you haven't taken anything out?"

"*Pas si bête,*" returned the child. "Not I. Think I want to cool my heels in the little saint? I was goin' to fetch it in the mornin'; but you take the curlyhead back his sacred. I don't want it. It danced out of his pocket. Some day," coolly, "I'll pick him. He's a—— I'd like to see his grape jam running," with an oath and sudden darkening

of face. Stargarde was familiar with some of the slang of recidivists collected together in large cities, but she had never before the advent of Zeb's parents heard it in the small city of Halifax. With a sensation of poignant and intense grief she looked at the child who, whether it was due to her environment or not, was talking more of it this evening than she had ever heard from her before.

"Curlyhead," Stargarde knew, meant Jew; "little saint," prison; "sacred," purse; and "grape jam" was blood. Oh, to get the child away from here, from the choking, stifling atmosphere of poverty and vice that was ruining her!

Zeb, as if aware of her distress, had curled herself up sullenly among the rags, and Stargarde rose to her feet and turned to speak to her mother.

In a corner of the room she found an extraordinary scene being enacted. Unknown to her, while she bent over Zeb, the younger of the two men had managed to stagger quietly from his seat and stand behind her, divided between an admiration for her magnificent physique, such a contrast to his own puny strength, and an endeavor to keep on his tottering legs.

The gravely watchful dog that had walked into the room behind his mistress, and lay curled on the floor beside her, saw nothing hostile in the man's attitude, and beyond keeping an observing eye upon him took no measures to make him retreat.

Not so sensible was the woman behind the door. For some reason or other she was highly displeased with the proceeding of the young man. Springing upon him as silently and as stealthily as a wild beast of the cat tribe would have done, she hissed in his ear, "Not for you to look at, Camaro; back! back!" and she motioned him to his seat.

He had reached the obstinate stage of drunkenness, and though a little fear of her shone out of his black and beady eyes, he shrugged his shoulders carelessly, and said in Italian, "Presently, presently, my lady."

"Not presently, but now," said the woman in pure and correct English, and having taken enough of the fiery liquor to be thoroughly quarrelsome, she threw herself upon him, dragged him to a corner where, when Stargarde turned around, she was quietly and persistently beating him with a stick of wood that she had caught from beside the stove.

Her husband sat stupidly watching her from the table, his hand going more and more frequently to the jug; and her victim, making not the slightest effort to withstand her, lay taking his beating as a submissive child might resign itself to deserved punishment from a parent.

"Stop, stop!" exclaimed Stargarde, hurrying to her side. "That's enough, Zeb's mother"—and throwing her cloak back over her shoulders she laid her hand on the woman's club.

"He insulted you," exclaimed the woman in maudlin fury, "I shall punish him."

Stargarde towered above her, strong and firm and beautiful, and would not release her. "Who are you?" she said in surprise. "You speak Italian and French, and now good English; I thought you were Zeb's mother."

"So I be," said the woman sulkily, relapsing into inelegant language, and pulling her hair over her eyes so that Stargarde could not see her features distinctly. "Here, give me that stick," and seeing that Stargarde would not obey her, she began beating the man with her fists.

"Oh, this is dreadful," gasped Stargarde, holding her back and gazing around the room, half choked by the heat, which was bringing out and developing a dozen different odors, each fouler than the last. "How can I leave Zeb here? Give me the child, won't you?" she said pleadingly to the woman.

"No, no," and a stream of foreign ejaculations and asseverations poured from the woman's lips, in which the man at the table, comprehending dully what was said, hastened to add his quota.

Stargarde turned to look at him, and found that he was fondling tenderly a little monkey that had crept to his bosom. She remembered hearing Zeb say that her father loved his monkey and would feed it if they all had to go hungry.

"Sweet, Pedro, thou art beautiful," he mur-

mured, and Stargarde seeing that he cared nothing for the friend whom his wife was so unmercifully beating, knew that she must not relax in her protection of the unfortunate one, or there might be broken bones, and possibly loss of life before morning.

"You were kind to want to protect me," she said, catching the woman's wrists in her hands and holding them firmly; "but you should not beat the man. He would not have hurt me. I am never afraid of drunken people. See, I will take him away from you," and sliding her hand under the little man's shirt collar she slipped him swiftly over the floor to the doorway. Strong and muscular, and a trained athlete though she was a woman, she did easily in cool blood what the other woman had only been able to do in her rage.

Zeb's mother precipitating herself upon her, hindered her from opening the door, till Zeb sprang from the bed and addressed her unreasoning parent in an eager jargon, in which Stargarde knew she plainly told her of the evil consequences which would arise from the indulgence of her wrath.

The woman, not too far gone to be amenable to reason, came so quickly to her daughter's view of the matter that she even gave the now insensible man several helping kicks to assist Stargarde in dragging him out into the hall. Stargarde going ahead, slid him down the few steps to the next land-

ing, where she laid his head on a bed of snow, and bound her handkerchief around an ugly cut on his wrist.

Before she finished, the woman exclaimed at the cold wind sweeping through the hall, and went into the room; but Zeb remained, watching and shivering, though she had on all the clothes she had worn through the day.

"Zeb," exclaimed Stargarde passionately, looking up at her, "how can I leave you here? I shall not sleep to-night for thinking of you."

The child shrugged her shoulders, but said nothing.

"Will you not come with me, darling?" said Stargarde. "I think your mother would give you up."

"Yer'll marry that——" Zeb scorned to bestow a name upon him; "then where'll I find myself?"

"My present plan is to live always in the Pavilion," said Stargarde firmly; "and Zeb, I want you with me."

Zeb relented a little. "I'll see yer to-morrer," she observed at length. "I'm tired o' this kind o' thing," pointing contemptuously at the prostrate man.

"And Zeb," continued Stargarde, as the girl showed signs of leaving her, "do open a window in there; the air is stifling."

Zeb chuckled. "So I does, every night. In an

hour them," with a jerk of her finger over her shoulder, "will be sound off. Then I jumps up and opens both winders, 'cause I likes fresh air. Good-night to ye," and with a farewell glance at Stargarde she slammed the crazy door behind her and went into the room.

CHAPTER XV

A LOST MOTHER

STARGARDE, lifting up her eyes and seeing that she was alone, hurried down the steps to the next floor, to a room belonging to a boys' club.

"Password," muttered a sepulchral voice when she tapped lightly on the door panels.

"Good boys," she returned with a laugh. It was not the password. "Death to the traitor," was the signal for the night; but they knew her voice, and a boy opened the door and slipped out.

"How do you do, Mike?" she said cheerfully; "can't you let me in?" He hesitated and she went on, "I want to see how your club room looks. Don't you want a new stove, and some chairs and pictures? I know where you could get some, if you do."

The boy's pale face brightened. "Hold on," he ejaculated; "I'll tell 'em."

He insinuated himself back into the room through the very narrowest possible space; there was a sound of shuffling of furniture, and quickly moving feet, then he told her she might enter.

The atmosphere of the room was thick with smoke ; they could not clear that away, though a window had been hastily opened, and the pure, cold air streamed in through the dusky atmosphere.

Boys' heads shone out of the cloud—not big boys, but half-grown ones, boys who drove small coal carts about the city—all noticeable by their universal blackness of hair and whiteness of faces recently washed. There was a good fire in the stove ; poor people will go hungry before they will go cold, she knew that. Of books, games, anything to amuse the lads, she saw nothing. A few empty boxes for seats were set about the stove. On one of them a forgotten knave of clubs lay on his back ruefully staring in the direction his fellows had gone, marked by a suspicious bulge in the pocket of one of the oldest lads present.

"Good-evening, Harry, Jim, Joe, Will," said Stargarde, nodding gayly, and mentioning all of the boys in the room by name. "What about the act respecting the use of tobacco by minors?" and she began to quote in a lugubrious tone of voice, "'Any person who either directly or indirectly sells or gives or furnishes to a minor under eighteen years of age, cigarettes, cigars, or tobacco in any form, shall in summary conviction thereof be subject to a penalty of not less than ten dollars.'" She broke off there, for the boys were all smiling at her.

"Aren't you glad I'm not a policeman?" she said. "Come now, boys, let us make a bargain. Pipes in the fire, and I'll furnish the room. I was just speaking to Mike about it."

The president, a lad rather more respectably dressed than the others, stepped forward. "Will you give us your terms in writing?" he said.

Stargarde smiled. "Too much red-tapeism," laying her hand on his shoulder. "You all hear, boys; I'll make this the nicest boys' club in Halifax if you'll throw away your tobacco, pipes, cigars, etc."

"For how long?" asked the president cautiously.

"Say for a year. Then if you're not healthier, happier boys, I'll be greatly mistaken. Try it for a year, and if you are worse off without tobacco than with it, go back to it by all means."

"A year isn't long," he replied, turning to his associates. "What is the opinion of the club?"

"Hurrah for Miss Turner!" said a lad, pressing forward enthusiastically.

"Make me an honorary member, Mike," said Stargarde so quickly in the ear of the boy who let her in that he thought it was his own suggestion, and immediately proposed her. There was a show of hands, and the thing was done.

Stargarde thanked them, promised a supply of books and papers, then said earnestly: "There's a

little matter I wish to mention, boys. In the hall out here lies a man with some bruises that want attending to. Can some of you look after him for a few days? Keep him here and come to me for whatever you want, and take good care of him, for he's a friend of mine."

She had scarcely finished when two lads were detailed for duty and were stealing up the steps. Her friends were pretty well known, and when she had one in trouble, others of her friends were always willing to assist her.

When the boys found that the man was a foreigner and unknown to them, they were filled with an important sense of mystery. A course of blood-and-thunder novel reading had prepared them for just such an event as this, and for some days they took turns in guarding the unfortunate man, who had received even a worse pounding than Stargarde had imagined, nursing him secretly, and feasting him on the daintiest morsels that the Pavilion restaurant afforded.

"Oh, how good the poor are to each other; how good they are!" murmured Stargarde, as she languidly descended from the club room and rejoined her patient lover. "Yes, I am tired, Brian," she said wearily, as she slipped her hand through his arm; "tired, but not with bodily fatigue. I am tired of the temptations to sin. It seems as if the Evil One is perpetually casting a net about our

feet. No one is exempt. But the poor! oh, the poor! it is hardest for them. How can they be good when they are ground down by the perpetual struggle for bread in miserable surroundings, and worse than that, worse than that," and her voice sank to a low wail, "the temptation that is always before them—nay, forced upon them—to drink deep and forget their misery."

They were passing the old Clock Tower, situated on the Citadel Hill. Camperdown looked up at its impenetrable face. "Sin and misery have been in the world ever since it began," he said hopelessly; "always will be till it ends."

"Ah, but what a grand thing to put a stop to a little of the sin and iniquity!" exclaimed the woman, turning up to the stars her bright and eager face. "That is one's only consolation."

"I wish you would not walk along the street with your face turned up in that way," was Camperdown's unexpected and jealous reply. They had just passed two soldiers who stared curiously at the beautiful woman on his arm, and just as he spoke a girl standing in a near doorway with an apron flung over her head made a saucy remark with regard to Stargarde to a broad-shouldered workman standing by her.

"Hist," said the man angrily; "you're new here, or you'd know who that is," and he took off his cap as Stargarde passed by. "There's hands

as'll be raised to slap your mouth, woman as you be," he continued half apologetically to the girl as the two people went by, "if you dares to pass a word agin her. She's the poor man's friend. She's always with 'em, sick an' dyin' and dead. She put my old mother in a handsome coffin——" and he broke off abruptly.

Camperdown and Stargarde were walking slowly so that they heard every word that had been said. "Brian," she said passionately, "do you hear that? and can you still want me to live only for pleasure and society? Oh, how dare you? how can you? Shame to you, Brian!" and the very stars seemed to have got tangled in the glitter and radiance and unearthly beauty of the eyes that she turned upon him.

He looked at her, growled something in a low, happy voice that she could not hear, then said dryly, "Hadn't you better give me my pocket-book?"

She stopped short. "How stupid I am; pray forgive me. Here it is," and she handed it to him. "How did you know that I had it?"

"By your face," he said shortly.

"I wonder who Zeb's mother is?" said Stargarde, as they walked slowly on. "She talks like a lady at times. I must find out. There's a mystery about them that I can't fathom. They've been dwellers in big cities. They're not like our poor

people, Brian. I wonder; I wonder——" and still wondering she arrived at her own doorway.

"You're crying!" exclaimed Camperdown, when he put out his hand to say good-bye to her. "What's the matter?"

"I am thinking about my mother," she replied in a low, distressed voice. "Is it not strange, Brian, that I hear nothing of her? From the day that I heard I had a mother till now, I have searched for her. Yet I can hear nothing from her; neither can any one that I employ."

Her voice failed, and with a heavy sob she dropped her head on her breast.

Camperdown looked at her in obvious distress. She so seldom gave way; he could see that she was suffering extremely. "Don't cry, Stargarde; don't cry," he said uneasily. "It will all come out right. We may find her yet."

"I am a coward," said the woman, suddenly lifting her moist, beautiful eyes to his face; "but sometimes I can't help it, Brian; it overcomes me. I never sit by a sick-bed, I never kneel by a dying person without thinking of her. Where is she? Is there some one to care for her? Perhaps she is cold and hungry and ill. Her body may be suffering, and her soul too, her immortal soul. Oh, that is what distresses me. She was not doing right—we know that."

"There is one thing I know," he said decidedly,

"and that is that you'll do no work to-morrow if you spend the night in fretting over what can't be helped. Come, take some of your own medicine. The Lord knows what is best for you ; go on with what you have to do and wait his time."

She brightened perceptibly. "Thank you, Brian, for reminding me. Good-night, my dear brother, always kind and good to me," and pressing gently the hand that still held her own, she gave him a farewell smile and went slowly into her rooms.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLONIAL COTTAGE

STANTON ARMOUR was a man who dwelt apart from other men as far as his inner life was concerned. A large number of people saw him going daily to his office; a smaller number had business dealings with him; a select few had an occasional conversation with him in the privacy of his own house; and of the outer man those people could give a very good description.

Of the inner man they knew but little. Wrapped in an impenetrable, frozen reserve, it was impossible to tell what was going on in the hidden recesses of his mind, except at some occasional times when he exhibited a flicker of interest or annoyance at something that was transpiring about him.

His reputation was that of an honorable, upright man, yet he was a person to be respected and avoided rather than cultivated and admired.

There were a few people—discerning souls—who looked deeper than this and even felt pity for the man. They said that his state of frozen composure was unnatural, and that there was somewhere a reason for it; he had received some

shock, he had a secret trouble, or had been disappointed in love, or had in some way lost faith in his fellow-men, or perhaps, it was hinted, his brain might be affected. It was a well-known fact that he had been a cheerful lad, a little sober in his ways, inasmuch as he had begged his father to take him from school and give him a seat in his office, yet still a lad happy and companionable in his tastes, and showing no sign of the prematurely grave and reserved man that he was so suddenly to become.

This change in him dated from the time that the firm suffered so heavily from the defalcations of the French bookkeeper, and most people believed that this was the true cause of Stanton Armour's peculiarities. He had been very much attached to the Frenchman, and his sudden falling into crime had given him a terrible shock. And stepping into the disgraced man's shoes as soon as he did, would have been an occurrence to sober a much more flighty lad than he had ever been. From the day of Étienne Delavigne's departure, Stanton Armour in spite of his youth, had begun to take upon himself a strange interest and oversight of his father's business, and in an incredibly short space of time was admitted to a partnership in the house.

As the years went by, though his father was still nominally head of the firm, he it was who managed all important transactions. Very quietly

this went on, and only the devoted servants of the house saw the persistent pushing of the father out of the places of responsibility by his youthful, talented, and apparently intensely ambitious son.

Outsiders, when the fact became impressed upon them, supposed it was Colonel Armour's good pleasure that his son should be master in place of himself, but such was not the case. The head of the house had been primarily a man of pleasure, but he also loved his business, and had thrown himself into it with a zeal and relish and a skill for making money that had made him the envy and despair of men less fortunate than himself. Then, after the lapse of years, he found himself quietly excluded from the excitements of business life. His son reigned while he was yet alive. He resented this at first, with a wickedness and fury and a sense of impotence that had at times made him feel like a madman, but in late years more wisdom had come to him, and for Stanton to mention a thing was to have his father's ready acquiescence.

The members of the family and intimate friends of the house knew that there was no sympathy between father and son, and very little intercourse. They rarely spoke to each other, except in the presence of strangers. Stanton was master in the business and master at home. He occupied the seat of honor at the table, and his father was as a guest. Colonel Armour did not even sleep under his own

roof, though this was his own doing, and of his usual place of sojourn we have to speak.

The grounds at the back of Pinewood sloped gradually down to that beautiful inlet of the sea—the Northwest Arm. Behind the house were on the one side, a flower garden, a tennis lawn, and a boat house ; and on the other a semicircular stretch of pines, that began in front of the house, and with a growth of smaller evergreens formed a thick, wedge-shaped mass down to the water's edge.

A few places there were where lanes had been cut among the trees and gravel walks formed. The broadest of the walks led to a handsome cottage, where dwelt Colonel Armour, at such times as he was neither away from home, nor up at the large house, his usual attendant being a Micmac Indian rejoicing in the name of Joe Christmas.

Joe would not sleep under the roof of a substantially built house. That would be too great a stretch of Indian devotion. The Micmacs do not take kindly to indoor life, and every night when his day's work was done, Joe paddled himself in his small canoe across the Arm, where he had a solitary wigwam among the firs and spruces of a bit of woodland belonging to the Armours.

Valentine Armour made a constant jest of the Indian's wildwood habits. "Plenty trees, Joe," he would say, pointing to the pines about the house. "Build wigwam here."

"No, no;" and Joe would shake his head, and show his tobacco-stained teeth in amusement. "Too near big house. Too much speakum."

Joe's connection with Colonel Armour arose from the fact that he had been his guide in many a hunting excursion in years gone by, and had found the colonel so indulgent a master that at last he had formed the habit of following him home in the late autumn, and establishing himself near him till the hunting season came around again.

He was a good cook, and he would occasionally condescend to perform household tasks, an unusual favor from a Micmac. He also had charge of the boat house, and at times, by a great stretch of courtesy, would render some slight assistance to the gardener or coachman.

He was an easy-going, pleasure-loving Indian, rather tall of stature, with olive skin, the dark, searching eyes of his race, and thick, black hair reaching to the back of his neck, and there cut squarely across. At a distance there was a ridiculous resemblance to his master about him, owing to his habit of arraying himself in Colonel Armour's cast-off garments. In common with other Micmacs of the present day, he despised the skins and blankets of his forefathers and aped the fashions of the white man.

None of the house servants ever liked him. He was "creepy and crawly in his ways," they said,

and though nothing could be proved against the good-natured, mild-spoken Christmas, certain it was that he knew quite well of the race prejudice that existed against him, and any man-servant or maid-servant who carried matters with too high a hand invariably departed with suspicious haste from the service of the Armours. They received a fright, or had an illness, or suddenly made up their minds that they would leave without formulating any complaint—in short they always went, and the Indian if remonstrated with at all, only shook his head, and ventured a long-drawn "Ah—h," of surprise, that he should be so misunderstood.

He professed not to mind the cold weather, but in reality he hated it, and during the winter days he spent most of his time in the cheerful kitchen at the cottage, where before a blazing fire on the old-fashioned hearth, he made and mended flies, fishing rods, bows and arrows, and inspected and polished the various instruments of steel designed to create havoc among beasts, birds, and fishes during the next hunting season.

A few days before Christmas, while Joe was squatting before his fire, Dr. Camperdown was driving leisurely out to Pinewood.

There had been during the preceding day a heavy fall of snow. Arriving inside the lodge gates, Dr. Camperdown heard a sound of merry laughter and shouting before him.

A number of young people in red, white, or blue blanket costumes were careering over the snow before him; and ejaculating, "A snowshoeing party! Flora always has something going on," he gave Polypharmacy an encouraging "Hie on," and made haste to join them.

As he caught up with the last stragglers of the party, he was inwardly pleased to see Vivienne among them.

"Had a good tramp?" he asked, after responding to her gay greeting.

"Delightful!" she exclaimed, her cheeks a blaze of color. "We've been across the Arm and to Dutch Village, and now we're coming in to have afternoon tea—and I haven't had a tumble yet," and as she spoke she gave a coquettish push to the toque on the back of her head, and looked at him over her shoulder.

"But you're just going to have one," he said, "take care."

It was too late—she had pushed the front of her long snowshoe too far into a drift, and down she went, with an exclamation of surprise, and sending up a cloud of white, powdery flakes above her.

Captain Macartney, who was her escort, made haste to assist her to her feet, and she got up laughing and choking, her mouth full of snow, her black hair looking as if it had been powdered.

"We're all too lively," she cried, beating her

mittens together; "our tramp hasn't taken enough out of us—just hear them shouting over there, and see me run," she vociferated, frolicking off on her snowshoes with a gayety and wildness that made her companion hurry after her, dragging his larger appendages along more heavily, giving an occasional hop to facilitate his progress, and crying warningly, "'Ware snowdrifts, Miss Delavigne. You'll be down again."

Down again she was, and up again before he got to her, and with some other members of the merry party sliding down a steep snowbank before the house. Then they joined a group below them busily engaged in arranging a set of lancers before the drawing-room windows.

"Dance my children, dance," called Flora approvingly, and in a lower key to Valentine Armour, "Unfasten my thongs quick, Val. I wish to go in and see if the maids have everything ready."

The young man went down on one knee, and bent his head over her snowshoes. He was in a costume of white, bordered by delicate pink and blue stripes. A picture of young, manly beauty he was, his black eyes sparkling, his cheeks glowing, the white-tasseled cap pulled down over the closely cropped hair, that would have been in waving curls all over his head had he allowed it to grow.

Judy, from a window above, was watching the progress of the dance. The couples stood oppo-

site each other, then floundering and plunging through the snow, essayed to form figures more or less involved.

Many falls, inextricable confusion, and much laughter ensued, then the attempt was given up. Unfastening their snowshoes they filed gayly into the house. Dr. Camperdown watched them out of sight, the smile on his face dying away, as his keen eyes caught sight of poor, mis-shapen little Judy, half-hidden behind the window curtains, her face convulsed with envy and annoyance. Such amusements were not for her. She never would be strong and well like other girls.

Dr. Camperdown's gaze softened. Springing from his sleigh, he anchored Polypharmacy to a snowdrift, and casting off his huge raccoon coat, like an animal shedding its skin, he took a book from a pocket in it, and made his way to the drawing room.

Divans, ottomans, and arm-chairs were full of young people, chatting, laughing, and telling jokes over their tea and coffee, sandwiches and cake.

"I believe you young people laugh all the time," he grumbled good-naturedly, coming to a halt in the middle of the room, and surveying them from under his eyebrows. "Girls especially—always giggling."

"How old are you, dear doctor?" exclaimed a pretty girl of seventeen, looking saucily up into his

face. "Is it a thousand or two thousand? I'm only twenty," and she made an audacious face at her teacup.

"Silly girl," and the man looked down kindly at her; "silly girl. Where is Judy Colonibel? She is the only sensible one in this party. Judy, Judy; where are you?"

"I don't know where she has bestowed herself," said Mrs. Colonibel complainingly. "She could be of assistance to me if she were here. Won't you find her, Brian?"

Camperdown went out into the hall, and lifted up his voice. "Judy, I have a present for you."

She appeared then—hobbling along over the carpet with childish eagerness.

"It is that *rara avis*, a Canadian novel," said Camperdown. "The glittering romance of the 'Golden Dog.' See the picture of him. Gnawing a man's thigh bone. Looks as if he enjoyed it. Read the French, Judy."

The girl bent her head over the book and read slowly:

"Je suis un chien qui ronge l'os,
En le rongeant je prends mon repos.
Un temps viendra qui n'est pas venu
Que je mordrai qui m'aura mordu." [1]

[1] The following is a free translation [ED.].

"I am a dog that gnaws his bone,
And while he's gnawing takes his rest;
In time not yet, but yet to come,
Who's bitten me, I'll bite with zest."

"Hateful words," said Dr. Camperdown, "and a hateful tragedy. When you go to Quebec, Judy, you'll see the dog tablet there yet. But you needn't go out of Halifax for Golden Dogs. Bitten ones there are here, plenty of them, gnawing bones and waiting a chance to bite back. You've got your own Golden Dog, you Armours," he added under his breath.

Then surveying critically the young girl whose face was buried in the volume, "Body here, Judy—mind already back to time of Louis Quinze. Don't read so steadily, you small bookworm. Remember your eyes. Better, aren't they?"

"No; worse," said the girl impatiently.

"Go and help your mother, won't you? She needs you."

"She can get on without me," sullenly. "I have to do without her," and pulling her hand from him, she made as though she would go upstairs. Suddenly she stopped, and eyed him curiously. She was struck by the intentness of his glance. "What are you thinking of?" she asked.

"Of a poor child—younger than you, called Zeb. When you're disagreeable you look like her."

She smiled disdainfully, and began to limp upstairs. "Judy," he called after her, "where's the colonel? He likes this sort of thing," with a gesture in the direction of the drawing room.

"He's not well," said Judy with a meaning smile. "Mamma sent for him, but he's dining early in the seclusion of the cottage. Good-bye, and thank you for the book," and she took herself upstairs with such haste that he could not have recalled her had he wished to do so.

"Poor girl," he muttered; "books her only comfort. Glad Flora isn't my mother," and with this sage reflection, he rammed his fur cap over his ears, turned up his coat collar, and opening a door at the back of the hall, crossed a veranda, went down a flight of steps, and struck into a path cut through the drifted snow, and leading down to the cottage.

It was very quiet under the pines. There was only a faint breath of wind, ruffling occasionally a few flakes of snow from the feathery armfuls held out by the flat, extended branches of the evergreens. Everything was pure and spotless. The white path that he followed was almost untrodden. The stars blinked down through fleecy clouds on an earth that for once was clean and without stain.

The lights from the cottage streamed out through the windows and lay in colored bands on the banks of snow. Dr. Camperdown paused an instant in the shadows of the trees as some one approached one of the windows and propped open a variegated square of glass.

"Must be getting hot in there," he murmured,

going nearer. "I hope the Colonel isn't getting *hors de combat.*"

He was looking into the dining room, a small apartment floored and wainscoted in dark Canadian wood, and hung around with pictures, trophies, and implements of hunting life. The floor was partly covered with bear and wolfskin rugs, and in the middle of the room stood a small table, covered with a spotless damask cloth, and having served on it a dinner for one person. Of this dinner Colonel Armour had evidently been partaking, but at the moment when Dr. Camperdown looked in at the window, his strength or will to enjoy it had suddenly forsaken him, for the Micmac was carefully assisting him to the floor.

Colonel Armour was, as usual, handsomely dressed, and held his *serviette* clutched in his hand, but his head hung on one side and his limbs seemed powerless as the Micmac, holding him under the arms, slipped him to the center of the soft, bearskin rug. The rug had been dressed with the head of the bear, and placing his master's head close to the fiery jaws, Joe took the napkin from the clasped fingers, straightened out the loose limbs, and placing a fire-screen between Colonel Armour's face and the leaping flames on the hearth, seated himself at the table and proceeded to eat up the dinner decently and in order.

Rejecting all the wine glasses that stood in a

group beside Colonel Armour's plate, Joe selected one of the several decanters on the table, and drank only from it, tilting it up to his mouth with an occasional stealthy glance at the prostrate figure beyond him.

"Port!" ejaculated Dr. Camperdown. "The beggar has a discriminating tooth. Drinks moderately too. Doesn't emulate his master," with a contemptuous glance at the hearth rug. "Sound as a pig, he is. I'll go in. First though," with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "must frighten Joe. He's doing wrong. Ought to be punished."

Drawing in a deep breath he ejaculated in a sepulchral voice, "Joe Christmas!"

The Indian had a conscience, and he knew that he ought to be taking his dinner in the kitchen, so when Dr. Camperdown's terrifying voice fell on his ear he sprang from his seat, wildly extended his arms in the air, and still clutching between his fingers the half-empty decanter, unfortunately reversed it and allowed the wine to trickle in a red stream down Colonel Armour's immaculate shirt front.

Camperdown laughed convulsively, and strode along the path to the front door.

The Micmac let him in and surveyed him with mingled respect, admiration, and remonstrance.

"Couldn't help it, Joe," exclaimed Dr. Camperdown chuckling. "You looked too comfort-

able. Is the colonel sick?" pointing to the hearth-rug.

"Not bery sick," said the Micmac, looking at the table. "Drinkum too much wine."

"Colonel can drinkum wine, but if Micmac drinks too much, he can go live in woods," said Dr. Camperdown meaningly.

"Me no likum wine," said Joe.

"Come now, Joe, is that truth in inside heart?" asked the doctor.

The Indian smiled and laid his hand on his wide chest. "Little wine good—make inside warm, Much wine bad—makeum squaws lazy."

"And Indians too," said Dr. Camperdown. "Now listen, Joe; I want to talk to you. Who gave Micmac medicine when he was doubled up with awful disease called cramps?"

"Doctor did," said Joe bluntly.

"Who gave him powders when he got too yellow, and pills when he got too fat?"

"Doctor did," replied Joe yet more bluntly.

"Who gave him good tobacco, and paid his gambling debts, when colonel would have been angry, and policeman might have taken Joe to prison and skinned him alive?"

"Big doctor did," responded Joe, his manner the quintessence of independence.

"And who will do it again? great fool that he is," asked Dr. Camperdown grumblingly.

"Doctor will," exclaimed Joe joyfully.

With an abrupt change of subject, Dr. Camperdown went on, "You know new young lady up to big house?"

"Me knowum."

"She very fine girl," said Dr. Camperdown earnestly.

"Bery fine," echoed Joe, in level, guarded tones, but with the slightest suspicion of a glance in the direction of the hearth-rug, that at once caught Dr. Camperdown's attention.

"Colonel not very polite to young lady," he said carelessly.

"Not bery polite," responded Joe with portentous gravity.

"Colonel musn't get too cross to young lady," asserted Dr. Camperdown without apparent meaning.

"Not too cross young lady," repeated Joe with the aggravating inanity of a talking machine.

Dr. Camperdown almost lost patience, and felt inclined to indulge in one of his fits of ill-temper. But he restrained himself, only muttering under breath, "You rasping, unaccommodating Micmac, I'd like to thrash you." Then he said aloud. "Young lady French, Joe. Her fathers and your fathers great friends."

Joe replied to this statement by a non-committal grunt.

"Servants up at big house not like young lady much," observed Dr. Camperdown.

The Micmac's sleepy eyes lighted up. "Cook—fat porpoise—Jane one wild-cat. She not stay many moons."

Dr. Camperdown laughed sarcastically. "You true prophet about servants, Joe. Shall I tell Mrs. Colonibel to search for new maids?"

Joe did not show any signs of confusion, except by withdrawing his eyes from Dr. Camperdown, and staring stolidly at the fire.

"You good servant, Joe," remarked Dr. Camperdown cajolingly. "You serve Colonel Armour well. You can serve him and young lady too. She all alone. You watch, Joe, and if young lady wants a friend, you help her. You not let any one do anything to hurt her."

Joe was a faithful servant to the House of Armour in his mistaken sense of the term, inasmuch as he was too ready to do the bidding of any members of the family, no matter how dishonorable a thing he might be required to do. If Vivienne Delavigne had been received kindly by the Armours and treated as one of themselves he would have had not the slightest hesitation in giving Dr. Camperdown the pledge he required. But with the keenness and sharp wit of an Indian, he had quickly divined the status of the young lady up at the big house, and thought that a promise of ser-

vice to her might complicate his relations with the family of his employer. And still, he was under great obligations to Dr. Camperdown, and felt sure that the physician would not require him to attempt the impossible. So at last he said gravely, "If young lady need, I servum—if no need, I no servum."

"That's good, Joe," said the Doctor with immense satisfaction. "You've given me your word, and being only a poor Micmac and not a clever white man, you won't break it. Here's a roll of tobacco. Good-night to you," and he swung himself out of the cottage as precipitately as he had come, hurrying along the winding path muttering contentedly, "That's done. Stargarde would be pleased, if she knew," and listening with pleasure to the faint song of the snowshoers who were just leaving the house :

"Hilloo, Hilloo, Hilloo, Hilloo !
Gather, gather ye men in white ;
The winds blow keenly, the moon is bright,
The sparkling snow lies firm and white !
Tie on the shoe, no time to lose,
We must be over the hill to-night."

CHAPTER XVII

MACDALY'S DREAM

"I WONDER where MacDaly is?" queried Stargarde.

Vivienne was spending the day with her, and together they were walking up and down the Pavilion courtyard. The brilliance of the afternoon sunshine and the purity of the earth, where a thin veil of snow lay over all deformities and unsightliness, had tempted them out of doors.

"Who is this MacDaly that you are so anxious to see?" asked Vivienne.

Stargarde laughed, then her face became grave. "He is a poor old soldier who boasts continually that his father was a gentleman, though he himself has sadly fallen from that estate."

"And is he one of your *protégés?*"

"Yes; he lives over the washhouse," said Stargarde with a motion of her hand in the direction of a near brick building. "I sent him to town with a note. I fear that he has gotten into trouble."

"Does he drink?"

"At times he does. He meets old companions who tempt him to do so. I feel a responsibility

about him, for he used to be Colonel Armour's night-watchman at the warehouse. He was dismissed for some cause or other many years ago, and he never ceases to mourn over it."

Vivienne wondered why Stargarde should feel any responsibility for Colonel Armour's actions, but dismissed the thought from her mind on reflecting that to Stargarde all men were brothers.

She put her hand through Stargarde's arm and pressed it gently as they walked up and down the path. "Do not worry about him. He will return. Think what a glorious day this is."

"Ah, yes," said Stargarde, turning her face up toward the deep blue of the sky. "It is a pleasure to live."

"I love this clear frosty weather," said Vivienne; "it is so much more agreeable than the wind," and she shrugged her shoulders inside her warm jacket. "And you, dear Stargarde, are you sufficiently clad in that short cloak?"

"Do I not look comfortable?" asked Stargarde mischievously.

They surveyed each other with amused glances. Both were very fair, there was no doubt about it. Over their cheeks Jack Frost had drawn his finger. They had the brilliant coloring, the light in the eye that comes to those in perfect health.

"My blood is dancing in my veins," said Stargarde; "and yours——"

"It dances also," said Vivienne demurely.

"Then we will remain out a little longer," said Stargarde; "as good as the air may be in the house it is always better out of doors."

"Please continue talking to me about your theories with regard to the poor," said Vivienne earnestly.

Stargarde pinched her cheek, then nothing loath entered upon a discussion of various philanthropic schemes where Vivienne, she knew, would follow her with interest. Occasionally, however, her glance wandered to the washhouse, and Vivienne knew that she was thinking of the ex-soldier.

MacDaly was not thinking of his kind patroness. He was lower down in the town, just steering his way out of a low drinking shop, and in a slow and interlaced fashion wandering down the street while he communed with himself after the following manner: "If I were making an observation on the subject 'twould be on the effect of the curiosity of the subject. That whereas and however, in some human creatures, liquor flies to the head, in sundry other and divers intelligent cases, it takes the opposite direction and bewilders the feet. On the present occasion, my head or head-piece, otherwise known as pate, noddle, or skull, is perspicacious and discriminating—acute and high in tone as usual. I feel that I could sing were there any one to hear," and lifting up his voice he began to warble dis-

cordantly and with a vainglorious and martial accent :

"'Tis the flag of Old England."

Pride will have a fall, and by reason of too much attention given to the head, the feet got beyond control, and MacDaly shortly found himself in the gutter.

Halifax people, no matter how great a fall of snow they have, immediately begin to dig trenches through it in preparation for the thaw which they know is sure to come. In one of these hollowed-out beds—no unpleasant resting-place for a warmly clad man who had just come from a heated saloon —Derrick Edward Fitz-James O'Grady MacDaly, old soldier, Irish Nova Scotian, loafer, drunkard, lecturer, merrymaker, and character well known about the town, reposed, till he was discovered by two small boys who happened to be passing up the street.

"Hallo, here's Skitanglebags," said one of them, referring to him by his accepted nickname, "drunk as an owl. Let's muzzle him."

"No ; cork him," suggested the other.

MacDaly, in his cool and comfortable bed, felt his soul revolting from both of the two forms of torture proposed. He knew that the boys were quite capable of either rolling and smothering him in the snow or of stopping up his mouth, for they

were at that age which La Fontaine says is "without pity."

"Gentlemen," he piped up shrilly, "would either of you be knowing any one that might for any reason be wanting a pup?"

True to the dog-trading instinct which has made Halifax vie with Constantinople as an agreeable place of residence for the canine tribe, the lads exclaimed in eager concert, "Have you got a pup?"

Yes; he had a pup, he said, and during a discussion of its merits he cunningly persuaded the boys to assist him to his feet. Then with one on each side of him, he ambled along the street nodding amiably to any acquaintances he happened to meet and suppressing with difficulty his strong desire to break forth into singing.

The two lads he was decoying home with him under pretence of wishing them to see the pup that he described as surpassing in beauty all other pups that had ever been offered for sale to them.

"What breed is it, Skitanglebags?" asked one of them.

"And what is the breed you might be wanting to have, if you'd not be above mentioning it?" asked MacDaly guardedly.

"Bull terrier."

"And you've named the name of the fathers and forefathers and grandmothers and patriarchs of my dog's tribe as far back as the records go," said Mac-

Daly. "His pedigree is that long that my wall is fairly covered with it, and it hangs down on the floor," and he plunged into an enumeration of the points of the dog. His head, jaws, ears, shoulders, chest, feet, color, symmetry, and size, were minutely described, the boys meanwhile listening with delighted ears, and forgiving him his frequent lurches against them. They also kept a brisk lookout for policemen, and when a dark coat with brass buttons was seen in the distance, guided MacDaly into the doorway of some house, where they kept him until the enemy had passed.

Long before they had reached the Pavilion the whisky that he had been drinking began to mount to his brain, and he shocked and annoyed the boys by his manner of conducting himself.

"Bother you," said one of them, kicking him on the shins. "Keep off my feet. You're doing the 'Dutch roll' and the 'inside edge' all over the place. You're not on skates."

"Oddsboddikins, what a glorious lady!" was MacDaly's response. "Smart and tricksy as a fresh-scraped carrot," and hat in hand, he bowed so low in admiration of a plain-featured, elderly woman who was passing, that he was in imminent danger of losing his balance and falling prostrate at her feet.

"I'll send a policeman after you," she retorted angrily, as she went by.

"Beauteous lady, sleek and pleasurable crea-

ture," pleaded MacDaly, looking after her, "be not repellent to thy servant. Thou art——"

His further speech was broken by the two boys, who, seizing him by the arms, hurried him so rapidly around a corner and into a long street that he had not breath enough to utter a word.

He proceeded along the street soberly enough, only taking off his cap to each electric-light post, and to each of the unused iron gaslight pillars, that still stud the streets of Halifax, till he came to a church. There he persisted in sitting down on the steps and shedding a few tears over his sins.

The boys at length drove him off, and he staggered along a few paces to a small field between the church and the schoolhouse, and gazed between the pickets of the fence.

"What are you looking for, Skitanglebags?" asked one of his escorts.

"A little mammiferous quadruped, my boy," he replied, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "A little thing with cloven hoofs and hollow horns, a creature called a goat. Alas, I loved it, and it has been taken hence."

"Oh, drop that," said the lads in chorus, and they again urged him onward. "What would the goat do there in winter? There's nothing but snow in the field now."

"I never loved a sweet gazelle," MacDaly hummed lightly, leaning back on his bearers, and

allowing his long legs to somewhat precede him up the hill. Opposite a schoolhouse he came to a dead halt. "Who comes here? Stand easy, sir."

Colonel Armour was walking along the street at a leisurely gait, a single eyeglass in his eye, a handsome sealskin cap set on his gray hair, his dark, heavy coat fitting him without a wrinkle. With his straight, military figure, his handsome appearance, no greater contrast to the week-kneed drunkard advancing toward him could be imagined. He stared slightly at MacDaly as he passed, but made no sign of recognition.

Like some noxious reptile fascinated by a bird of fine appearance MacDaly gazed at him. When Colonel Armour went by without quickening or slackening his pace, MacDaly turned, and with eyes glued to the retreating figure watched it out of sight. Then he stooped down, and catching up some snow pressed it to his forehead.

"Let go my arms, boys," he said, with some irritation. "I can walk now. I've had a shock," and he marched ahead of them without help, keeping his feet well and only stumbling occasionally.

Silently they passed by one house after another, nearly all built in the monotonous, square-roomed style of architecture that prevails in Halifax, until they arrived before the Pavilion. The boys took MacDaly, who was now partly over his shock, and was again walking unsteadily, in through the gate

to the washhouse where, entirely oblivious of them, he was about mounting to his small apartment in the attic.

"The pup, Skitanglebags!" ejaculated one of them impatiently.

He stared at the boy in a confused manner, then as his promise came back to him, muttered: "Yes, yes; the pup—I'll try to find him. Follow me, gentlemen." Rolling his eyes about him as if seeking inspiration he climbed the steps to the attic, closely followed by the boys.

"Why don't you call him?" asked one of them. "What's his name?"

"His name?" and MacDaly, nimble-witted as he was, could not for his life call up on the instant the name of any of his former quadrupeds. "I call him—I call him——" he responded.

His sentence was never finished. While speaking to the boys, his eye fell on a small hole in the wall, through which he took surveys of the courtyard. He still kept up some of the traditions of a long-ago brief military experience. The washhouse was his fortress; the Pavilion sometimes the camp of an enemy, sometimes the stronghold of an ally. Just now there was a besieging force advancing upon him, consisting of two ladies. With a face of dismay he watched Stargarde coming toward his place of retreat. The figure of the young lady with her was not familiar to him. MacDaly did not

care particularly who she was; he did not look at her until, as Stargarde pointed to the washhouse, the girl lifted her head. Then he clapped his hand to his mouth to restrain a shrill cry—a long unseen face had risen before him.

"Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!" he gasped, and huddling the two astonished boys together, he drove them into the small room where he slept, and turning a wooden button on the door, forbade them on the peril of their lives to move hand or foot till he should tell them to do so.

"MacDaly, MacDaly—are you here?" came floating up to his room in Stargarde's clear voice.

Shivering violently, MacDaly clutched the shoulders of the half-frightened, half-angry boys. "Whisht—whisht," he said in a warning undertone to them.

"Not home yet," they heard her say to her companion. "I must send some one to look for him.

When the sound of their footsteps died away, the boys wrathfully demanded an explanation from MacDaly, for they plainly saw that they had been deceived in the matter of the pup.

Instead of an explanation they received a temperance lecture. Shocked once more into partial sobriety, the miserable man, with the fumes of liquor still on his breath, and with an earnestness that impressed the boys in spite of their anger,

begged and prayed them never to touch a drop of anything stronger than water.

"It will be the ruin of you, my lads," he said brushing the moisture from his bleared eyes. "Swear by your fathers and mothers that you'll leave the cursed stuff alone. 'Twill make ye anything—thieves, liars, and even murderers."

The boys, more struck by his extraordinary ascent from foolishness and frivolity to impassioned and clear language, than by the fervor of his exhortations, shook off his persuasive hand and, assuring him that they could take care of themselves, insisted upon their immediate release from his room.

Not until Stargarde had crossed the veranda and entered her rooms did MacDaly permit them to go. Then, with many adjurations to be quiet, they were allowed to slip out from the washhouse and make their way back to town.

After their departure MacDaly threw himself on his bed. He might at any time be summoned to an interview with Stargarde and it would be well for him to refresh himself by a nap.

In a few minutes he was snoring loudly and going over again in his brutish sleep the tragic story of Étienne Delavigne, that had been brought to his mind first by Colonel Armour, whose appearance never failed to move him strongly, and secondly by the unexpected apparition of the young French girl, who was so marvelously like her father.

In a troubled phantasmagoria Colonel Armour was before him—not the Colonel Armour of to-day keeping up his ghastly fight with old age, but the handsome middle-aged man of twenty years before. Stanton Armour was there too, a bright-faced happy lad. Étienne Delavigne, their modest and retiring bookkeeper, and Madeleine Delavigne, his shy, proud, aristocratic wife, the pet of the Armour family. Then a horrid jumble took place—the mild and gentle Étienne Delavigne was furiously angry with the colonel, and a quarrel was taking place between the two of which he, Derrick Edward Fitz-James O'Grady MacDaly was sole witness. Delavigne was flung out of his employer's office, the warehouse was on fire, and the evil one appeared in person to seize the eavesdropping MacDaly, who lay on his back rigid with terror.

While he was sleeping and dreaming a tall dark figure had come noiselessly up the steps to his room, a hand was laid on his shoulder, first lightly, then more heavily. MacDaly started up on his bed, bathed in perspiration and trembling violently. A tongue of flame leaping up from the dull fire showed him a brown face that in his first confusion he imagined must belong to some evil spirit that had been sent for him.

He muttered, "Not ready, spirit," put up a frantic prayer for protection, and clutching at his bedclothes as if they would be an anchor to hold

him to earth, shrunk into as small a space as possible.

His visitor was Joe the Indian, who grinned in delight at MacDaly's terror. "Cunnel sendum," he said in a sepulchral voice, and slipping something that rustled under MacDaly's chin, as he found it impossible to lay hold of his hand, he withdrew as silently as he had come.

MacDaly's terror was over. Springing up, he poked the fire, looked at the denomination of his bill, and then proceeded to caper around the room on the tips of his toes.

CHAPTER XVIII

WARM FRIENDS

WHEN MacDaly recovered from the effect of his joy over Colonel Armour's gift he muttered to himself: "Now for something to satisfy, regale, and otherwise gladden the inner man."

Opening the door of a small closet in his room he looked on an upper shelf, where he found nothing but a few crumbs on empty dishes, and a huge black teapot standing with its protruding nose toward him.

Clutching the teapot with both hands he proceeded toward the restaurant piously murmuring: "Pray, kind and beneficent spirits of light, vouchsafe unto Mary a quiet and peaceable condition, that she may in all honor and excellency of entertainment receive a poor wayfarer."

Mary was in an excellent temper, MacDaly was happy to observe through the kitchen window of the eating house. Knocking delicately at the door, he advanced with a mincing step into the room; then bowing low, cap in hand, and placing his mammoth teapot on the back of the stove, he modestly took a seat in the corner.

Mary was dandling a baby on her knee and took no notice of him, and though remarks were fairly bursting from his lips he thought it more prudent to restrain them. Presently the owner of the baby, who was also the superintendent of the eating house, came bustling into the room.

"You here, MacDaly?" she said brusquely; "how is that?"

"Good-evening to your ladyship," he said, getting up and bowing profoundly. "As I sat in my lonely domicile or dwelling and observed the cheerful light streaming from this mansion and abode of pleasure, I said to myself, 'Perchance they will find it in the goodness of their amiable hearts to allow me to take my humble refreshment under the shelter of their kindly roof, and in the solacement of their excellent presence, and——"

"That will do, MacDaly," interrupted the superintendent; "where is your tea?" and lifting the cover she gazed into the black, yawning depths of his teapot.

"Truth to tell, I did not bring any, lady," he said subserviently. "I thought for a single occasion I could do without the liquid refreshment in my enjoyment and appreciation of the solids."

"And where are the solids?" she asked, looking sharply about her. "Now MacDaly, you know the arrangement is that you cater for yourself. We are not rich people at the Pavilion, and if we give

you a room, and a fire, and bedclothing, it is all you should require of us. There are poor creatures worse off than you that we are bound to help. For this once I'll put some tea in your teapot. Now produce your bread and butter."

"Madam, beloved lady, neither has your humble servant any of the staff of life nor of its trimmings."

"Mary, give me the baby, and cut him some bread and spread it thin," said the superintendent in quiet despair.

"Most high-minded and condescending lady," exclaimed MacDaly, in a burst of ostentatious generosity, "I will pay you nobly for your entertainment. If you or your worthy and estimable helpmate, Mary, could change this money——" and bowing elegantly he held out to her the bill that he had just received.

She pounced upon it. "Ten dollars! Derrick MacDaly, where did you get this?"

He informed her that it was a present.

"Now, I'll not believe that," she said firmly, "till you tell me where it came from."

In great dejection of spirit at the conceit which had made him show his gift to her, he mentioned Colonel Armour's name.

"It was kind in him to give it to you," said the matron quietly pocketing it; "and I am sure he expected you to make good use of it. I shall give it to Miss Turner to buy you some new clothes."

MacDaly immediately went down upon his knees, begging and praying her to restore the money to him.

"I will do nothing of the sort," she said. "You would drink it away; and if I buy you clothes you'll keep them; for that much may be said in your favor, MacDaly, however drunk you are, you never allow anyone to cheat you out of your clothing. Get up and take your food."

MacDaly ate the bread and drank the waters of affliction that evening. He would not be able to go to town again the next day and have a jollification as he had planned to do, and with melancholy tears dropping down his cheeks, he sat watching Mary tidy her kitchen and afterward put on her hat and jacket to go for a stroll with her soldier lover, who was waiting for her by the Pavilion entrance.

Later on he was sent for to go and see Stargarde. He found her busy with a heap of sewing.

"Good-evening, MacDaly," she said kindly. "Did you deliver my note?"

"Yes, gracious lady," he responded mournfully; then he proceeded to give her an account of the afflicting manner in which he had been treated by one of her deputies.

Stargarde was listening indulgently and attentively when he suddenly paused and began to fidget with his hat.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"'Tis the foreign and unlooked-for young lady," he said, pointing to the inner room. "If it is not unbecoming, may your humble servant ask wherefore and whence does she come?"

"Vivienne," called Stargarde; "come here, dear."

The girl sauntered out with a book in hand, whereupon MacDaly fell into a state of great agitation. Vivienne surveyed him curiously, and Stargarde laid down her work. "MacDaly, did you know this young lady's father?"

"Yes, complacent lady, yes," he murmured.

"Did you?" said Vivienne eagerly. "Stargarde, may I ask him some questions?"

"Certainly, dear."

Vivienne sat down near the bewildered man who was spinning his hat through his hands like a teetotum. "Yes, yes," he ejaculated; "I knew him. A beautiful gentleman he was; never gave me the cross word. It was a sad grief to the colonel to lose him—a sad grief."

"Were you here when my father died?" asked Vivienne softly.

Stargarde gazed at her in deep anxiety while MacDaly gabbled on, "When he died, my dear—I mean my revered young lady—oh yes, I was here; he is dead—of course not being alive and present is to be dead and buried, otherwise interred and sepulchred."

"Vivienne," said Stargarde in a pained voice, "your father did not die here."

"Did he not?" said the girl; "I thought that both he and my mother did, and that they were sent to their French home to be buried."

"No," said Stargarde, "your mother died in the French village; I do not know where your father's body lies. MacDaly, I think that you had better go home."

"May I not just ask him a few things more?" said Vivienne pleadingly. "I want to know whether he remembers my father when he first came here."

"Do you, MacDaly?" asked Stargarde.

"Perfectly and most harmoniously; a youth fitted in every way to attract and embosom in himself the affections of the master who, progressing at a nimble pace through a settlement inhabited by the curious people known as the French, thrusts his white hand in the gutter and picks out the treasure-trove, enunciating and proclaiming with his accustomed clearness, 'What'll you take for him?' throws the money and brings him home and his fortune's made. Stamp-licker, office lad, confidential man, and keeper of the rolls to the master, and to top, crown, and in every way ornament his bliss, joins himself in joyful matrimony and dwells in peaceful and well-to-do habitation with his greatly-esteemed spouse, while at the same

time some of us poor lads had nothing but a hut and a housekeeper," and concluding his long sentence with a groan MacDaly looked with a dull and melancholy eye about him.

"I don't understand him," said Vivienne with a puzzled gesture.

Stargarde was hanging her beautiful head in a way unusual with her. "He refers to your father," she said, "and to the manner in which Colonel Armour became acquainted with him."

"Oh I know that," said Vivienne. "Colonel Armour was having a driving tour through the province and seeing a pretty orphan boy that he thought would make a good pet he paid some money to the people who took care of him so that they would give him up."

"Yes," said Stargarde.

Vivienne gazed at the half-witted specimen of humanity before her in silence. Then she said, "I will not detain you any longer. Perhaps I will see you again some day."

Without his usual politeness MacDaly darted from the room as if he had been held there a prisoner.

"I wished to talk more to him," said Vivienne; "but I saw that you did not care for it, Stargarde."

"Come here, darling, and sit on this stool by me," said her friend as soothingly as if she were talking to a child; "I am so glad to find this interest in your parents in you, and yet, and yet——"

"And yet—what?" queried Vivienne.

"I wish that you had chosen to speak to me first rather than to MacDaly."

"This was an impulse," said Vivienne. "I have always intended to ask you some questions; but we are so seldom alone—and though my father and mother are much in my thoughts I dread to mention their names. Can you understand?"

Stargarde replied by a pressure of her hand.

"They are sacred to me," said Vivienne dreamily. "I would not for the world have the Armours know that I often wake up sobbing because my parents have been taken from me. You know I am supposed to be a proud person," and she looked up at Stargarde, her eyes filled with tears.

"You are not proud—that is, not too proud," said Stargarde warmly. "You are an ardent, generous girl, with a heart full of love that will be bestowed on your fellow-creatures."

Vivienne suddenly put her hands to her face. "O Stargarde, Stargarde," she exclaimed, "how shall I tell Captain Macartney that I cannot marry him? And Mr. Armour, what will he say?"

"Do not afflict yourself too much. You have made a mistake, as many another girl has done. The only way to make amends is to say, I have done wrong—forgive me. Then start over again. That is all any of us can do in the perpetual error of this life."

Vivienne looked up over her shoulder and pressed one of Stargarde's hands adoringly to her lips. They had slipped into their usual relation. The girl was sitting at the feet of the woman she so much loved. She was curled up on the hearth rug, her red draperies wound around her, her back against Stargarde's knees.

"Let us return to my question," said Vivienne at length, "my parents. Will you not tell me what you know about them? Was my father," proudly, "as became his peasant up-bringing, a boorish man, or was he a gentleman?"

"The latter, I think, from what I have heard; you know I never saw him. He is said to have been a gentle, amiable young man, a favorite with all who knew him."

"And what made him leave the Armours? I have always fancied that it was his health."

"No, it was not his health," said Stargarde reluctantly.

"What was it?" asked Vivienne wistfully.

"My dear child, you have confidence in me?"

"Most implicit confidence."

"Then take my advice; go to Stanton Armour. He knows more about your parents than any man living. He will tell you just what is good for you to know. Will you do this?"

"Yes," said Vivienne, in a constrained voice. "But you speak as if there were some mystery.

Surely there is nothing that all the world may not know?" Stargarde looked down at her compassionately. "Sometimes," said Vivienne, struggling with an emotion that she could not altogether hide, "sometimes I fancy that there is something I do not understand. Judy once gave me a hint of it. Mammy Juniper in her ravings urges the wicked Ephraim to make restitution to some one that I think is my father. Do you know what she means, Stargarde?"

"Go to Stanton," said her friend, with a lovely smile of pity and affection. Then leaning forward till Vivienne felt her sweet breath on her face added, "You need comforting; let me rock you."

She held out her arms invitingly, and half laughing, half protesting Vivienne found herself, dignity and all, enwrapped in a close embrace. Stargarde had her on her lap and was rocking back and forth, soothing her as a mother would a child.

To and fro they went, the one slim and graceful, with dark skin, brilliant and questioning eyes, and black hair lying loosely on her forehead, the other a Venus of Milo, who held her burden, tall as it was, as easily as she would have held a baby.

The soreness and tightness about Vivienne's heart gave away, and burying her face on Stargarde's shoulder she shed a few surreptitious tears.

"That's right; it will do you good to cry," murmured Stargarde.

"There is some one at the door," said Vivienne presently. "Let me get up, dear Stargarde."

"It's only Mary with the milk; come in, Mary."

"It's not Mary," said a well-known voice. "Beg pardon for interrupting so charming a tableau. You missed that, Armour," and Dr. Camperdown turned to his friend, who was following him.

"Not altogether," said Mr. Armour, with a swift glance at Stargarde's amused face and Vivienne's flushed one.

"What an unexpected honor!" said Stargarde, gayly shaking hands with them. "You," looking at Armour, "rarely honor us with a visit."

"And I come too often, I suppose," said Camperdown gruffly. "Take off your coat, Armour; we'll stay a little while."

CHAPTER XIX

BROTHER AND SISTER

ARMOUR, after hanging up his coat, sat down in a corner of the little room.

"You don't often come to town in the evening, Stanton," said Stargarde.

"No; I had to see some merchants who are going away early in the morning. The sleigh was sent in for me, so I thought I would call for you and Miss Delavigne."

"Are you going out to Pinewood?" asked Dr. Camperdown of his hostess.

"Yes; to spend the night and a part of to-morrow."

"It will do you good," he returned; "I suppose you are sorry to have her go, Miss Delavigne?"

"More sorry than I can tell you," said Vivienne.

"You saucy little girl!" and he frowned ominously at her. Then in a lower key, and making sure that Stargarde and Mr. Armour were deep in conversation, "Has she been talking to you?"

"Oh, yes, of many things."

"Good; let her advise you. What do you think of her?"

"I—I think that she is magnificent," said Vivienne, trying to speak calmly.

"Better still," said the physician in deep satisfaction. "Be with her all you can; she's a rock for strength and an angel for sweetness."

"Vivienne," said Stargarde, "Stanton wishes to go; are you ready?"

"Yes," said she, rising and going for her wraps.

"Don't drive home," said Camperdown a few minutes later, when they stood looking at the heaped-up rugs in the sleigh standing before the door. "There's no room for me, anyway. Let's walk. It's a fine night. Look at the stars and the moon," and he pointed up to the blue vault of the sky.

"Are we not going to be rid of you yet, Brian?" said Stargarde, with a comical face.

"A medical man does not desert his patients. I've two to see home. Stanton, I forbid your driving. A walk will make you sleep better. Take Miss Delavigne on ahead of us. If you go too fast I'll say that you are trying to outwit me. Now one, two, three, and away. Send your man home."

"Not till I find out whether these ladies prefer to walk," said Mr. Armour.

"Of course they do. I asked them."

"Oh, well, if it is arranged"—and turning to the sleigh he said to the coachman, "We shall walk; do not wait for us."

Vivienne glanced at Armour's face as they went under the gateway. She wished to know if he was annoyed at Dr. Camperdown's persistence in giving them the long walk out to Pinewood, and so coolly foisting her upon him as a companion, when he would so much rather have had Stargarde.

He did not seem annoyed. There was even, she fancied, a look of cold, placid satisfaction on his face as he walked along soberly by her side, his hands in the pockets of his coat, his head bent slightly forward. However, he did not speak to her, and seemed to be in one of his usual reveries, or listening to the conversation of Stargarde and Camperdown, who were close behind them.

Passing quietly by one door after another they came suddenly upon MacDaly, who was sneaking guiltily away from home.

Armour and Vivienne passed him, Camperdown stared at him without speaking, but Stargarde drew up before him with a pained and remonstrating, "Why, MacDaly, I thought you were in your room?"

MacDaly was too much overcome to speak, but he seemed to be touched by the distress of the only person in the world that he cared for besides his own unworthy self, and bowing low he laid a bottle at her feet.

Camperdown promptly broke the neck of the bottle and threw it in the gutter, and calling to

Vivienne and Armour not to wait, he and Stargarde retraced their footsteps in order that they might see the wandering lamb safely within the shelter of the Pavilion.

Vivienne looked at Mr. Armour, who was gazing fixedly at her. "Stargarde is an ideal woman; I did not think that in real life there were any like her."

"Her moral character is one of great beauty," he said, "and she is utterly fearless; yet what is the use?"

"The use?" repeated Vivienne with vivacity; "has she not stopped MacDaly from spending the night in some saloon?"

"For to-night, yes; for to-morrow, no. He is an inveterate drunkard."

"But he promises her to do better. He may reform some day."

"How can he reform when inherited tendencies are crying out in an opposite direction?"

"Stargarde does not believe in heredity," said Vivienne.

"She does, but to a limited degree only. That is where she makes a mistake. Yet in her case every theory with regard to heredity has been thrown to the winds. One might almost say she was born damned." Vivienne looked him severely in the face. "I have shocked you," he said irritably. "Yet if you knew everything——"

"Stargarde says," began Vivienne, "that one should look after little children, give them good food and wholesome surroundings, and God will take care of the rest."

"What about the ancestors?" he said. "Children are helpless there, and that is where the mischief comes in. I wish I had had the choosing of mine," he added under his breath. "I should have been a happier man."

A swift and intense compassion took possession of Vivienne, which, though she gave no expression to it, he seemed to understand perfectly and to slightly resent.

"I am not so unhappy as you imagine," he observed, "and I beg your pardon for talking to you so freely; I don't know why I do it."

His tone was as sulky as that of a boy, and Vivienne wisely forebore to answer him. For a long time they walked on without speaking; then to break the awkward silence she said, "Stargarde has saved many children."

Mr. Armour smiled faintly. "You are coming under her influence; if it weren't for your engagement I daresay you would make a Stargarde the second."

"I am going to break my engagement," said Vivienne quickly. "Mr. Armour, I cannot——"

He stopped short and looked down at her. "What is this?"

"Stargarde has been talking to me—she told me to explain to you. There were some things that I did not understand; and I think with her that one should love deeply the person that one marries."

Mr. Armour concealed his astonishment. There was about the girl at his side a gentleness and frankness that always enveloped her like an atmosphere when she was fresh from Stargarde's influence. He could not speak harshly to her, yet he was annoyed.

"I think," he said gravely, "that you had better give this matter some further thought. There is a precipitancy about your entering into engagements and breaking them that I do not like."

"Don't you understand?" she said, with an eager little gesture. "It is this way: You have a calm and clear judgment, and much experience. You form your opinions slowly. I am young and rash, and, as Stargarde says, I have made a mistake that many another woman has made. It is a good thing to be married, but I did not think long enough about the suitability of, of——"

"Of Captain Macartney, I suppose," said Mr. Armour dryly. "What will he say to this abrupt dismissal?"

"He will understand," said Vivienne; "he is good and kind. I do not dread telling him half as much as, as—you might fancy I would."

Mr. Armour noted her confusion of thought.

"Or half as much as you dreaded telling me," he said; "am I right?"

"You are," said Vivienne vivaciously; "yet, if I may say a word in my own defense, it is that my haste in entering into this engagement was to please you."

"Indeed," curtly; "then I am to be made the scapegoat?"

Vivienne was wounded by his tone, and made no reply to him.

"And what are your plans for the future, may I ask?"

"Stargarde wishes me to live with her."

"You will get tired of that life in a week."

"Then I will do something else," bravely; "but I really think that you are mistaken in me."

"I am not mistaken in thinking you are an irrepressible worry," he communed with himself, just as Vivienne said,

"May I ask just how much control you exercise over my movements?"

Armour stared at her. "What do you mean?"

"When shall I become mistress of my own affairs?"

"Your own affairs," he said, with an involuntary smile. "Well, I should say that you were managing them yourself just now."

"I do not think that you understand me. You or your father was legally appointed my guardian."

"There was no legal appointment," he said, pushing his fur cap farther back on his head. "We took charge of you on our own responsibility."

"But my father—when he died did he not ask you to take charge of my money and educate me?"

"What money?" and Mr. Armour's eyes grew colder as he fixed them on her.

"Whatever my father left me," said Vivienne patiently. "I don't know anything about it, except that it is safe in your hands, and that I want to give some of it to Stargarde if I go to live with her."

Mr. Armour's gaze wandered all about him before he answered her. Then he said quietly: "Where would your father—a clerk on a salary—accumulate money to leave you?"

"But what have I been living on?" said Vivienne in surprise.

"I leave that to your imagination."

"Have you been supporting me all these years?" she asked, her face suffused with color.

"Again I reply that I leave that to your imagination," he said, twisting an icicle off a window that they were passing.

She stopped suddenly and covered her eyes with her hands. Mr. Armour scanned her narrowly. Was she trying to impress him? No; her emotion was genuine. Her gloved fingers, held like bars over her crimson, almost purple cheeks, were outward and mute signs of inward suffering.

"I would have undeceived you if I had known of this delusion of yours," he said kindly.

"Do I owe you everything—everything?" said the girl, dropping her hands and fixing her glittering eyes on him.

He bowed gravely.

"And you have thought me extravagant, I dare say."

"That is hardly a fair question," he said, with an approving glance at her fur-lined jacket and richly trimmed gown. "I wished you to dress like a lady."

"A lady!" repeated the girl bitterly, "yes; a fine lady. Now I shall have to support myself."

"Why so?"

"I am grown up now. You have given me a good education. I shall take no more favors from you."

"Why not?"

"Because I am too proud to be dependent."

"That is exactly why you should go on with your dependence. What can you do to support yourself?"

"If I cannot support myself by assisting Stargarde, I will teach."

"What can you teach?"

"Everything that I have been taught."

"Pardon me—a smattering of everything. You have received an ordinary boarding-school educa-

tion, which is about the worst possible preparation for a teaching career. If I had intended you to teach I would have put you in a public school or a college."

Vivienne looked steadfastly at him without speaking.

"Be content to do as I tell you," he said, walking on and clasping his hands behind his back. "Your father served us well. As a lad I worshiped him. I plan to support you until the day of your death. If I die first, suitable provision will be made for you. As I told you I want you to remain at Pinewood for a time. Then you may go where you will. You are getting on well now. I detest those scenes that Flora delights in; you women know how to put a stop to such things, and I am glad that you have done so. I am glad too that Judy likes you—she leads a lonely life."

Vivienne was not listening to him. To his surprise he found that she had dropped behind him and had struck an attitude of distress against a snowbank.

"She looks like the picture of her ancestress, Madame La Tour, defending her husband's fort," he muttered, hastening back to her.

"I am not faint," said Vivienne feebly. "I am coming right on; but I have had a blow—such a blow, but"—proudly—"you will not see me break down again."

She spoke with a remnant of her old spirit, and Armour smiled encouragingly at her. "Take my arm, you foolish child. You have not broken down. Now let us set out again, and have no further interruptions. See, there are some people coming—friends of ours too, I believe. Try to get some color in your face."

Vivienne held her head well up till they had passed, then it sank on her breast again. Armour glanced at the little, clenched hand that lay on his arm and said gently and yet a trifle disdainfully:

"Do not imagine that you are suffering."

"I do not imagine it. I know that I am."

"Your disturbance is purely a thing of sentiment," he said. "I do not say that you are not troubled—I dare say you are; but you will get over it. You are young; you do not know the meaning of the word sorrow."

"What is it then to suffer?" she asked.

"To suffer"—and he drew a long breath and cast a glance about him like one taking his last look on earth and sky—"ah, I will not tell you."

Vivienne shuddered; in the midst of her own preoccupation she realized that there were depths in the unhappy nature of the man beside her that she could not fathom, even if she were allowed to look into them.

"Do you know anything of astronomy?" asked Mr. Armour suddenly.

"No, nothing," she replied; "we did not have it in any of the schools that you sent me to."

He paid no attention to the sob in her voice, and in tones as cool and passionless as if there were no such things as sorrow and unhappiness in the world, he pointed out some of the constellations to her. In a short time they were beyond the outlying houses of the city, and with lagging steps and upturned faces passed slowly along a snowy road, from which they had an extended and uninterrupted view of the blue sky spread above them, where countless stars shone and sparkled like priceless jewels, set far above the unworthy earth below.

"I used to devote a good deal of my time to the study of the heavens," said Mr. Armour, when they stepped slowly under the murmuring pines of the avenue, and their view of the sky was shut off. "I still have a telescope in the cupola, and occasionally I go up. Do you ever hear me?"

Yes; she had heard his heavy step passing her door, often late at night, and had surmised that the strange, self-contained man, who was such an enigma himself, was about to engage in a study of the mysteries of the celestial bodies.

"Star-gazing ruined Palinurus," interposed Camperdown, who came rolling up to the broad stone doorstep, looking like one of the good-natured men-of-war sailors who are so frequently seen about the streets of Halifax.

He had evidently caught some scraps of their conversation, for he went on: "See the Æneid, Book V., line something or other. Palinurus directed his eyes to the stars; the god shook over him a branch dripping with Lethean dew; and rendered sleepy by Stygian power, over he went into the clear waters. Poor Palinurus."

"What is the matter with Camperdown this evening," said Armour, addressing Stargarde, who at that moment came sauntering out from under the pines.

"I don't know," she returned, glancing uneasily at the subject of their remarks. "I never saw him like this before. His tongue rattled so fast that I had to send him on ahead in order that I might enjoy the quiet beauty of this evening."

"Hear a parable, O friends," said Camperdown, without raising his eyes, and scraping the snow about with his foot. "Once a certain man sat under a plum tree, where he looked and longed exceedingly for a beautiful young plum that hung just over him. The plum grew and ripened, but being the most obstinate plum that ever lived, would not fall into the man's mouth. One day being weak with impatience and with waiting for the plum, he opened his mouth to yawn, when straightway the plum fell into his mouth and choked him——"

"So that he never spoke again," said Stargarde, with a stifled laugh.

"No," said Camperdown, lifting his eyes and surveying her with preternatural gravity; "loosened his tongue and gave him an unwonted flow of language."

"Good-night, Camperdown," said Armour; "I'm going in."

"So am I," said Dr. Camperdown agreeably, "as far as the pantry. I'm ravenous, Stanton. Stargarde offered me no supper this evening. Pity a poor, starving man."

"Come in," said Armour shortly, unlocking the door and ushering his guests into the hall, which was dimly lighted. "Now, Camperdown, don't make a noise, or you'll have Flora down upon us."

"That isn't the way to the pantry, man," said Camperdown, pushing him aside. "That's the china closet. It's too hot there to keep food. Here, follow me," and taking a box of matches from his pocket he led the small party—for he insisted upon bringing Stargarde and Vivienne along—into a room whose shelves were lined with a goodly supply of tempting meats and dainties.

"Cold goose and apple sauce!" he ejaculated, setting aside a large dish. "You mustn't touch that, ladies, nor you, Stanton. 'Twill give you indigestion. Mayonnaise of celery—I'll have some of that with it. Here is some jelly for you, Miss Delavigne—lemon, I think, and custard, and cake. Stargarde, you may have those mashed chestnuts. Stanton,

you'd better try a soda biscuit. Now 'fall to,' as old Hannah says, and don't make a noise."

Vivienne was not in a humor for frolicking, and excusing herself went upstairs, her hands full of pieces of sponge cake that Dr. Camperdown had bidden her take with her. When she reached the staircase leading to the upper flat, she found that Mammy Juniper was, as Judy graphically expressed it, "on a prowl," and had started it by one of her favorite occupations, laying a curse on Vivienne.

The old woman's face was terribly distorted, and she had pushed her white nightcap far on the back of her grizzled wool. Her candlestick she held in her hand, waving it back and forth across Vivienne's door panels as if she were making mystic signs.

Vivienne listened for a few instants to the anathemas called down upon her innocent head, which this evening seemed to take the form of bodily afflictions. "Make her like Job, Lord," the old woman was praying; "give her boils and no potsherd to scrape them. Cover her with sores. Let her be racked with pain——"

Such expressions were not pleasant to listen to, and too weary and disheartened this evening to disturb the old woman, who was apt to become belligerent if interrupted in her ravings, Vivienne retreated noiselessly to the hall below. There she sat down on the top step of the staircase and watched for Stargarde to come from the pantry.

In a few minutes Camperdown, chuckling amiably to himself, came through the lower hall and passed out of the house. Some time elapsed before the other two appeared. Then they came sauntering along together, Stargarde with her hand on Mr. Armour's shoulder, and looking fondly into his eyes. When they reached the middle of the hall, she drew his head to her and kissed his forehead repeatedly: "Good-night, my dear boy. May all good angels guard your sleep."

Vivienne in her bewilderment and distress almost cried out. She had become very much attached to the eccentric physician, whom Stargarde tolerated so good-naturedly, and she fondly hoped that some day Stargarde would marry him. And now she was bestowing caresses on another man, which from a woman such as she was, could mean only one thing, that she loved Mr. Armour and would marry him.

Some movement that Vivienne involuntarily made, attracted the attention of the two people below; Stargarde looked up hastily and on seeing the disturbed face peering down at her, grew first pale and then red, but did not release her hold on Mr. Armour. "Vivienne," she said quietly, "come here, dear child."

Slowly and most unwillingly Vivienne went down step by step, till at last she stood in the lower hall.

Stargarde led Mr. Armour up to one of the panel

mirrors with which Flora was fond of decorating the house. There she threw one arm around his neck, and with her hand covered his moustache. A quick motion of her other hand brushed back the yellow curls from her face. The exposed forehead in her case, the hidden moustache in his, heightened the strong resemblance between them that Vivienne was intensely astonished to perceive, and yet wondered at herself for not noticing before.

The two heads were of the same classical shape, the straight noses were alike, both had a clear, healthful pallor of skin and faint coloring of the cheek; but Armour's thick, light hair was straight and waveless, and several shades paler than Stargarde's yellow, curling locks.

In troubled confusion Vivienne gazed at them, thankful that their backs were to her, and that Stargarde had been thoughtful enough to present their faces to her in the mirror. They were brother and sister. She did not understand it, nor know what to say about it, and it was an immense relief when Stargarde turned to her with one of her quick motions, kissed her lovingly, and going upstairs with her murmured, "Don't worry over it, dear; it is all right."

When they reached the turn in the staircase, Vivienne looked over her shoulder. Mr. Armour was going about the hall, putting out the lights, with the same dull, unmoved expression of counte-

nance that he had worn ever since he came into the house. Under his own roof there always seemed a heavier shadow upon him than when he was away from it.

"Oh, Stargarde," said Vivienne, clasping her friend's hand to her breast, "I am so miserable!"

"I know it, darling; your face is pitiful. Go and undress and get into your little white bed, and I will come and sit beside you, and you shall tell me all about it. I want to speak to Mammy first."

Late that night, long after Stargarde had watched Vivienne lay her black head on her pillow and had kissed her, murmuring sweetly in French, "*Bonne nuit; dormez bien, mon ange*," old Mammy Juniper crept to the sleeping apartment of the stranger under the roof. Noticing that there were tears on the lovely cheeks, she wiped them away, and with fierce mutterings looked in the direction of Vivienne's room and called down a curse upon her, if she had been the one to bring them there.

CHAPTER XX

CHASED AS A BIRD WITHOUT CAUSE

STARGARDE had had a busy afternoon. The table in the middle of the room was littered with account books, in the midst of which she had cleared a small space so that she might take her tea and go on with her work.

Bread and cheese, celery and tea, composed her frugal meal, and she was eating and drinking cheerily and thanking God in her heart that she had so many more blessings than she deserved.

Yet there were some things that caused a shadow to pass over her lovely face. Zeb was one of them. All the afternoon she had been thinking of her. Out in the playground in front of her windows, the ruddy-faced children whose parents lived in the Pavilion, had been playing merrily, and she had wished a dozen times that Zeb was among them.

The very air of Halifax is military, and even the children are warlike in their games. The children had built a huge snow fort and manned it with a body of resolute defenders, who gallantly resisted the beseiging force till their supply of ammunition, consisting of snowballs, had given out.

A spirited sortie had not mended matters. They were overpowered, their officer in command captured, their flag trampled in the snow, and that of their conquerors run up in its place.

And Zeb might be sharing the children's fun and frolic if she would; but she would not. She had plainly given Stargarde to understand that she did not wish to have anything more to do with her, and was going on in her own way with sullen resignation.

Stargarde sighed mournfully as she drank her tea. "And it was all on account of Brian," she murmured. "Zeb was getting on well with me till he came here that evening. Strange that she should be so frantically jealous of him; and she promised to come too. But I will not complain. God will give me back my wandering lamb. I must beg Brian not to come here for a time."

As if in punishment of her inhospitable thought, she at that moment heard his heavy step on the veranda, and the utterance of her name in his peremptory accents:

"Stargarde, Stargarde, let me in."

She sprang up, opened the door, and watched Dr. Camperdown in surprise, as he walked in holding something in his arms closely wrapped in his sleigh robe.

This something he put down on the broad, low couch against the wall, and throwing back the robe,

disclosed to view a much battered and bleeding Zeb. The child's dress was nearly torn from her body. Her black hair, discolored and partly drawn over her face, was matted with blood that had run down from cuts in her head.

"Take scissors and cut it away," said Dr. Camperdown shortly. "I'll be back," and he hurried from the room. In a very short time he was with her again, having with quick, impatient fingers, thrown out Polypharmacy's weight on the snow, obtained his surgeon's bag from the sleigh, and seized the whip from its socket. This latter he smiled grimly at, as he brought it in and set it in a corner of the room. All the upper part of it was gone, broken off short, and the heavy handle was stained with blood.

"Doctor, doctor," moaned the child, who, when Stargarde touched her, recovered from her state of insensibility. And "Doctor, doctor," she continued to moan all the time they were washing and dressing her wounds and fitting in place the strips of court-plaster. The cuts and bruises were all about her head. The little, thin body, a mere skeleton of a thing, was unhurt, and at last Camperdown ejaculated, "Let her alone now; she'll drop off again."

Stargarde, while there was necessity for action, forbore to ask questions, and when her attendance of the child was over, still forbore, for she saw that

Camperdown was in a state of furious, repressed temper.

"May I go to the kitchen?" he asked abruptly; and at her murmured, "Certainly," he withdrew, taking his whip with him, and making a great noise and splashing while cleaning it. When he came back into the little parlor, she was glad to see that his features were less convulsed. She poured him out a cup of tea, which he drank absently and in silence, and then sat with knit brows looking at the unconscious child on the sofa.

"How long since you've seen her?" he said at last.

"Two days," replied Stargarde. "She has been avoiding me. Poor child, she has not been in a good temper. The truant officer found her out, and being under fourteen, she was obliged to go to school. Some of the girls told me that she was very angry about it on account of her shabby clothes. They also said that they feared she wasn't getting enough to eat. Think of that, Brian, in this good Christian city of Halifax, where thousands of citizens sit down daily to comfortable breakfast tables."

He made some sort of an inarticulate reply, and she continued: "I went by there the other morning and the little things were singing their opening song, 'For daily bread and wholesome food, we thank thee, Lord.' Think of the mockery of it!

The city refuses bread to their children and puts a song into their mouths."

"Have you been making up your books?" asked Camperdown, with an abrupt change of subject, and a glance at the papers on the table.

"Yes; I have just finished collecting this quarter's rents, and I wanted to get things in order before Christmas. I wish we had a dozen of these model tenement houses, Brian. Do you know I am besieged with applications to enter? And yet some people say that if you build houses for the poor they won't go into them."

"If any man said to me to-night, 'You're stripped of what you possess; you're a pauper,' I would commit suicide," said Dr. Camperdown.

"Why would you do that?" asked the woman gently.

"Because they're badly used; that is, the paupers."

"I should make a distinction between paupers and poor people," returned Stargarde. "A pauper is a person dependent upon charity. A poor person, or one who is not as well off with regard to this world's goods as his neighbors, should be one of the happiest and most independent of mortals. When I am coming home these winter evenings I love to look in our Pavilion windows. What could be more cheerful than the neat little kitchen, the small supper table, the blazing fire with the wife

and children waiting around it for the father's return? Those people have no carking care, no worry as to keeping up appearances, no elbowing each other in the mad rush for social distinction. Of course they have worries; they would not be human if they had not; but their very simplicity of life tends to lessen those worries."

"But they're neglected, they're neglected," said Camperdown irritably. "Look at the children of the rich. Suppose the parent leaves them; a trained servant takes charge. The poor woman goes out; she can't take her children. Who's to look after them?"

"A neighbor, an elder child."

"A neighbor," repeated Camperdown, in what would have been accents of scorn, had he not remembered he was talking to the woman he so much loved and respected; "a neighbor; and suppose the neighbor a worse rascal than yourself? Leave the respectable poor and take the vicious and criminal classes. Wild beasts look after their own; but suppose the beast is out and the young alone. Who steps in as tender nurse?"

"The city should be a tender nurse to the children of the poor," responded Stargarde sadly. "There should be public playgrounds and playrooms with trusty women in attendance. What a load of anxiety would be taken from the minds of poor parents who are obliged to go out and work

by the day, leaving their children often to doubtful companionship. I have known," in a low voice, "a humble woman who scrubbed floors and who was not permitted to take her little girl with her. All day long she was racked by anxiety as to whether that child was in good company. She could not lock her up, she could not trust her with any one, for she was in an evil neighborhood."

"What became of the child?" asked Camperdown, a red and angry light in his eye.

"She is one of the worst girls in the streets of Montreal."

"Then a curse upon the city for its neglect," he said, with a fierce burst of wrath.

Stargarde looked at him curiously, and with visible satisfaction. "Brian," she said gently, "do not waste time in cursing an evil, but set to work to remedy it. And may I ask what extraordinary thing has occurred to make you reason from such a change of base?"

"There—there!" he ejaculated, pointing to the sofa. "Never saw it as I did just now." Then going on with rapid utterance, "Was driving home along Brunswick Street—dusky, but still could see a bit. Happened to look up at old rookery you took me to. One of the top windows open. Just as I looked, child there," with a wave of his hand toward the sofa, "rose up, stared at me like a rat out of a cage—face set, wild expression, and called,

'Doctor!' Then she fell back. I rushed into the house and upstairs, nearly breaking my neck on loose boards; no one about the halls, though I could hear them lively enough in rooms. In the front-attic den—a child there, in hand to hand tussle with a lout of a shoemaker of this street, Smith by name. You know him?"

"Yes," replied Stargarde, who was listening in pained attention.

"Brute drunk, beating and tearing at the child; and she, poor brat—the children of the poor know everything—defending herself as nobly as a beauteous damsel assailed in her castle."

"And you, Brian," said Stargarde, hot tears of shame and sorrow in her eyes, "what did you do?"

"Knocked him down, of course. Child threw herself at me in a frenzy of relief. He'd choked her so she couldn't scream. Don't take much strength to stifle a child," with an angry dilation of nostrils, and an accent of superb disdain. "I put her aside and addressed shoemaker. May the Lord forgive me, but I was in a rage. Told him I'd give him his choice; he could go to the police court and I'd ruin him, or he could take a beating, and I'd hush the matter up. He took the beating—there's nothing like the lash for attempted crimes against women and children—and he lay there and waited till I went down for the whip. His back's pretty sore; you'd better go see him;

but don't let the thing get out, for the child's sake," and his voice softened as he glanced toward the sofa.

"The Lord sent you there, Brian," said Stargarde, through her tears.

"I got my lesson too," said the man, twitching uneasily as if his back too were sore. "Stargarde, the worst is to come. The poor devil turned on me as he left—the whip had thrashed the liquor out of him—and snarled at me that I might take my share of the blame. 'Tis you gentlemen that send us to hell,' he said. 'You drink your fine brandies and whiskies in your hotels and clubs, and license the devils that sell us poor men made liquors that are half poison and make us run mad at anything we see.'"

"Brian!" exclaimed the woman. "You never touch intoxicants yourself. You know the evil of them. You do not work actively in any temperance cause, but surely you would never sign a license for any man to keep a saloon!"

He stood before her like a schoolboy culprit. "I own property in this ward," he said shamefacedly. "Old Denver, that keeps a saloon near Smith's shop, came to me to sign his license. The man has to get his living. I didn't think—and put my name down. That's what stings now," he went on contritely. "Perhaps Smith got his liquor there."

Stargarde drew herself up to her full height.

"Do I understand you to say that you, a reasonable, intelligent, human being, knowing what would be the effect of alcoholic poison on your own system, and refusing to partake of it, would yet sign a paper allowing this poison to be sold to your fellow-citizens, every one of whom is as precious in the sight of God as yourself?"

His silence gave the answer to her question, and she went on with clasped hands and eyes raised to the ceiling in a protest of despair: "There is no name for this awful traffic—no words to express the frightful misery of it. With all that has been said and written, no words have yet been found to fitly characterize it. It is unspeakable, indescribable, and," with a swift dropping from the abstract to the real, "to think that you, Brian, would touch it even with the tip of your little finger!" She dropped into a seat by the table, laid her head on her arms, and burst into tears.

She was disappointed in him, and, stung by a thousand furies, he made no further attempt to justify himself, but rushed from her presence.

CHAPTER XXI

A QUIET EVENING

DINNER was over at Pinewood, and all the family but Mr. Armour sat, stood, or walked about in the *rose du Barry* atmosphere of the drawing room.

"The outlook seems more gory than usual," muttered Valentine, with a groan, placing his handsome figure in a partially-shaded corner, "probably because all the lamps are going. Confound those carnation shades, and confound the everlasting desire of women to have their own way! If Flora decided to hang the place with *crêpe* we'd have to submit. I wish Pinewood had a different mistress," and the young man glanced discontentedly at her, as she sat quietly engaged with some work in a flow of ruddy light from her favorite lamp.

The night was a cold one. The great furnace and the open fires in the house were burning with wild and headstrong draughts, and from the crossed sticks of wood on the drawing-room hearth, mad, scarlet flames went leaping toward the outer air.

Mrs. Colonibel was thinking about an approaching dance—thinking so busily, as she drew the

silken threads in and out of her linen, that she had no time, as she usually had, to bestow glances of suppressed jealous anger on Vivienne and Judy. The two girls were wandering about the room arm in arm, having just come in from the conservatory, where Judy had plucked camellias and scarlet geraniums to make a corsage bouquet for Vivienne.

Colonel Armour sat by the fire, pretending to read, but surreptitiously watching Vivienne, who seemed to be clad in a kind of unearthly beauty in the roseate hue cast over her face and white figure by the colored lights of the room.

"Pray, Judy, make no more jokes," she said, drawing the deformed girl down to a seat beside her. "My lips are really fatigued with smiling. Let us be sensible. Perhaps Mr. Valentine will sing to us. Will you?" and with a pretty, beseeching gesture she turned to the young man.

He bowed gravely and went to the piano. "It is the only time that I can endure him," mused Vivienne, "when that flood of heartfelt and touching melody comes from his frivolous lips. How can he sing so divinely—he, a trifler, an idler?"

Valentine, with eyes fixed on her, was singing "Eulalie." His sweet, strong, and powerful tenor voice filled the room. Some penetrating quality in it touched the girl strangely, and tears came to her eyes as she listened.

"Star of the summer eve,
Sink, sink to rest!
Sink ere the silver light
Fades from the west;
But nevermore will I
Watch keep for thee,
With her I loved so well,
Sweet Eulalie."

As the last plaintive, piercing note died away, and while Vivienne was murmuring her thanks and Judy was examining the singer with a curious and critical eye, as though she had just discovered something new and unusual in his appearance, Mr. Armour came and stood quietly inside the doorway. Vivienne saw the other people in the room looking at him, and turned around. Perhaps owing to his coming within the radiance of the glowing lamp shades, the expression of his face seemed kinder than usual. His eyes were fixed on Judy. There was a sort of friendship between him and his cousin's child greater than that existing between any other two members of the Armour family. It was a well-known fact that the girl detested her mother, that she often fell into violent passions with Valentine because he teased her, and that she usually ignored Colonel Armour as completely as his elder son did.

Armour and Mammy Juniper were her favorites, and even with them she did not always agree. However, Armour it was who had most influence

over her, and he it was to whom Mrs. Colonibel appealed when Judy's fits of temper threatened to disturb the balance of power in the household.

When Judy saw that Armour's attention was directed to her, she made a face at him and dropped her head on Vivienne's shoulder.

"Judy," he said, "some telegrams have just come in. I must write letters and I have a headache——"

He paused for a reply, and Judy raised her head with an aggrieved expression. "Stanton Armour, am I the kind of person to be mewed up in your den with you all the evening and write letters for love?"

"No, Judy, you are not that kind of person. You require an equivalent for services rendered. I make the usual offer."

"What do you get, Miss Secretary?" asked Valentine jokingly.

"He," nodding toward Armour, "gives me a dollar an evening. Do you think it is enough?" suspiciously.

"Enough, Judy?" and Valentine laughed in pretended amusement; "not half nor a quarter enough. A young lady of your abilities should command three dollars at least."

"I won't go for a dollar, Stanton," said Judy stoutly, and she dropped her head to its former resting place.

"If I paid my typewriter at the rate I pay you, Judy, she would think herself fortunate."

"Have you a typewriter in your office, Stanton?" asked Judy, whose curiosity was aroused.

"Yes."

"Does she write all your letters for you?"

"No; some of them only. I dictate to her and she takes down what I say in shorthand and then copies on her machine."

"I should like a typewriter, Stanton. Will you get me one?"

"If you promise to learn to write on it."

"I will; and Vivienne will help me, won't you, my blackbird? And I will write for you this evening, Stanton," graciously; "for on the whole, you are a satisfactory kind of man. Come Vivienne," and getting up she extended a hand behind her.

"I wish to do some reading in my room," said Vivienne, folding Judy's fingers together and putting them from her.

"You can read in the library," said Judy imperiously. "I sha'n't go one step without you."

"The evening is wearing away, Judy," said Mr. Armour patiently.

"Come with me at once," exclaimed Judy, stamping her foot at Vivienne. "I tell you I hate to write stooping over a desk and holding a stiff pen in my hand. I must have something nice to look at. You shall come."

Vivienne was very much annoyed. For weeks Judy had not spoken to her in anything but a caressing tone. What had come over the strange girl? "I shall not go anywhere with you when you speak to me in that tone," she said proudly.

Mrs. Colonibel looked up from her work, and seeing that she was not observed, indulged in a scornful smile. Colonel Armour laid down his paper, and in open amusement surveyed the two young people standing opposite each other with flushed and disturbed faces.

"Pray keep on quarreling, children," said Valentine. "You are both charming in those attitudes, I assure you."

Vivienne blushed a yet deeper crimson, and holding her head well up, walked from the room.

Judy hobbled after her, caught her hand, and kissed it repentantly. "My sweet girl, have I offended you?"

Vivienne smiled and pressed her hand, but continued on her way toward the staircase.

Judy clung to her. "Do come with me; it is hateful in there. Stanton is so solemn. If you will come, you may sit with your back to him and look at me."

"Pray put an end to this teasing, Miss Delavigne," said Armour wearily, and opening the door of the near library.

To Judy's great delight, Vivienne came back

with her. Into the large, quiet room with its sombre rose and ashen tints they went. "How can you have a headache in this cool place, Stanton?" said Judy. "Now if you were in the fiery furnace of the drawing room one might understand it. You must turn up your lamp—there is not light enough for me—and poke your fire. I am cold. Where shall I sit? Not too far from the heat, if you please. Draw that little table up for me and put that grandfatherly chair in front of the fire for Vivienne, and you may sit behind the big table."

"Does your head ache badly?" asked Vivienne, fixing her large, dark eyes on Armour's face.

"Rather badly."

"That means it is splitting," said Judy briskly. "Most men would say that. Stanton never exaggerates."

Armour smiled slightly, and having complied with Judy's rather unreasonable demands in the way of supplies of pens, blotting paper, and all the paraphernalia of a secretary's desk, seated himself at a little distance from her and began to dictate. Judy wrote a fair, round hand, and under the pressure of a silver spur had become familiar with the ordinary forms of business correspondence, so that the writing went smoothly on. The girl, unlike her spendthrift mother, was inclined to be miserly, and hoarded every cent that she received to be de-

posited in the savings bank, the gloating over her bank book being one of her chief pleasures in life.

One hour passed, then another, and still Judy wrote steadily on, only stopping once or twice to ask Mr. Armour to replenish the fire, or to bestow a loving glance on Vivienne who had fallen asleep over her book, her head resting on the cushion of her high-backed chair. "I'm tired," she exclaimed at last, throwing down her pen. "Won't this do?"

"Yes," he said looking at his watch. "I had no idea it was so late. I fear that I have fatigued you."

"Are they to be posted to-night?" said Judy, her eyes wandering to the heap of letters on the table.

"Yes. Just ring the bell beside you; Vincent must go to the post office."

"I will stamp the envelopes," said Judy obligingly. "Please pass me your glass moistener. I hate to lick things. Here is Martha; will you give her the message for Vincent?"

When the letters were disposed of, Armour took up his station on the hearth-rug, and Judy threw herself in an ecstasy of silent adoration before Vivienne. "Isn't she an angel, Stanton?"

"Not an angel, but very much of a woman," he replied, calmly surveying the sleeping girl.

"You're a man," said Judy sharply, "and when

you see a pretty girl in a white dress you admire her, and you needn't try to make me think you don't. I was reading the other day that Napoleon thought a slight woman—he hated fat ones—dressed in white and walking under trees, was a lovely sight, and I quite agree with him. So do you. What are you frowning about? Don't you like Napoleon? Everybody worships him nowadays."

"A human tiger with a thirst for blood? No."

"Well, he admired women."

"He was a beast in his relations to them, Judy. Why does Miss Delavigne so often wear white?"

"She likes it; but she's going to give it up."

Armour was struck by Judy's mysterious tone. "Why does she do that?" he asked.

"She says she can't afford it; it's a terrible grief to her that she has no money of her own."

"Ah, she told you about that discovery, did she?"

"Yes, she couldn't keep it from me. I saw that she was fretting over something and I teased her till she told me. Don't you see a difference in her?"

"In what way?"

"Why, she is so subdued, and she thinks a great deal and often lies awake at night. That's why she's sleeping now. And she tries to mend her clothes. Dear me!" and Judy began to laugh, "she makes a sad botch of it. She darned a

stocking the other day till it was so lumpy she couldn't wear it. She worries too about breaking her engagement to Captain Macartney. You know that, don't you?"

"Do you imagine that Miss Delavigne would confide the history of her love affairs to me?"

"No; but you might make her. When are you going to let her leave here, Stanton?"

"I don't know."

"You'll miss her when she goes, mark my words. You are as red as one of mamma's lamp shades now merely from thinking about it. I shouldn't wonder if you are in love with my treasure yourself," and seizing a fold of Vivienne's gown she pressed it to her lips.

"Do you see any symptoms of it?" he asked coolly.

"Yes; when you are carving you always give her the bit of meat nearest the bone, and you watch her when no one is looking, and you hate for Val to pay her any attention, and you don't want Uncle Colonel to come near her. You and I are a sad pair of pagans, Stanton. You don't like your father, and I don't like my mother—who isn't worthy of the name, so I call her mamma. Do you know what makes me hate Uncle Colonel so much?"

"No; I wish you wouldn't run that word 'hate' so hard."

"Well, 'detest' then. Do you remember that

wall-eyed housemaid with pink cheeks that we had three years ago?"

"Yes."

"One day I saw Uncle Colonel kissing her in the back hall, and she looked as if she liked it, and then he kissed her again, and she said, 'Law sir, there might be some one lookin'.' I went up behind and gave her a slap on the back, and said, 'You saucy hussy, get to your work,' and I said to Uncle Colonel, 'You old fool!' and I have never liked him since. I don't see what gentlemen want to kiss servants for, when there are flocks of ladies who would be proud and happy of the honor; do you, Stanton?"

"No, I don't."

"Did you ever kiss a woman, Stanton?"

"I once had a mother, Judy."

"You are begging the question; but your mother was lovely, wasn't she? In that painting in your room she has a sweet, patient face like a nun's. I don't see how she got on with Uncle Colonel; probably he hastened her end. Mammy Juniper says you are more like her than Val. Hush, my sweet saint is waking up. No, she isn't. I want to beat myself sometimes when I think how hateful I was to her when she came."

"What did you do?"

"I teased her; but soon I began to like her, and now I could not live without her, and if she leaves

Pinewood I shall go too," and Judy threw a defiant glance up at the man standing over her.

"Don't talk nonsense, Judy," he said, scanning disapprovingly the little passionate figure crouched on the hearthrug.

"Why shouldn't I follow her?" continued the girl vehemently. "Hasn't she done more for me already than my mother has ever done? Wasn't I left, a baby, to the charge of servants who tumbled me about, and injured my spine, and made me a fright, so that I shall never get married as long as I live?" with a choking sob. "And then she hated me because I was ugly, and any time that I had died she would have been glad; but I sha'n't die. I am going to live for Vivienne. She is making me well and strong. Do you notice how much better I am looking?"

"Yes," he said kindly. "There is a change in you. You are putting on flesh and have more color in your cheeks, and I see that you don't use your crutches as much as you did. Camperdown, you know, has told you for years that you were too dependent on them."

"Vivienne did it," said Judy triumphantly. "She begged me to gradually lay them aside, and she goes for walks with me, and urges me not to eat sweets and pore over books. You know mamma was always bribing me to do something for her by saying that she would give me a box of caramels

and chocolates, and Vivienne puts them in the fire ; and have you noticed, Stanton, that at the table I watch her and eat only what she does ? "

" No ; I haven't."

" I do ; she says it will help me, to see another person doing without dainties. Was that ice cream nice this evening ? " wistfully.

" I forget ; did we have any ? Yes, I believe it was."

" It was pistachio, my favorite flavoring," said Judy. " Vivienne didn't take it, so I couldn't. She was hungry, but she refused ever so many things. All this afternoon we were at the rink. She is as graceful as a bird on the ice, Stanton. She skated in Scotland, so she has kept up with the new things. She was waltzing with Mr. Trelawney, and doing the double Dutch roll and the grapevine and all kinds of figures that I don't know ; and I walked about and watched her and sat by the fire in the dressing room and drank only one cup of tea, for Vivienne was looking."

" Was your mother there ? "

" Oh, yes, and ever so many other people, skating around and around. Such a gossip and clatter ! Mamma skates gracefully too. Why do fat people so often skate and dance well, Stanton ? "

" I don't know."

" Stop Stanton ; don't talk any more ; Vivienne is really coming out of her sleep. See her eyelids

quivering. What will she say first? 'Is your headache better, Mr. Armour?' Now I am going to wake her as the princes in the fairy tales wake the princesses. Don't you envy me?" and bending over Vivienne, Judy laid an airy kiss on her lips. "Heigh ho, maiden, awake!"

Vivienne lifted her heavy lids and started up in laughing confusion.

"You adore Parkman," said Judy tantalizingly; "yet you fall asleep over him."

Vivienne smiled at her, and without replying turned to Armour and uttered the predicted sentence.

"My headache is gone, thank you," he replied, stroking his mustache in sober amusement.

"I beg your pardon for falling asleep," Vivienne went on; "but the sound of your voices was soothing; I found it impossible to resist."

"Now what shall we do?" said Judy, jumping up. "Go to bed, I suppose. What time is it, Stanton? Ten o'clock; too late for tea in the drawing room, but we might make some here. Will you help me, Vivienne?"

"If it will not take very much time."

"That is another thing that she makes me do," said Judy to Mr. Armour, "go to bed early. But we won't be long, dearest. Will you drink some tea, Stanton?"

"No, thank you."

"Perhaps cocoa would be better," suggested Vivienne.

"Yes," replied Judy, "much better. Brian Camperdown says it is the least harmful of all our beverages. Do you think you could find us a pot, Stanton, to boil some water?"

"I will try," he said, laying his hand on the door knob.

"Let us all go," exclaimed Judy, seizing Vivienne by the hand.

Together they visited kitchen and pantries, and on their return journey were met by Mrs. Colonibel, who stared in astonishment at their burdens of a water kettle, cups and saucers, a cream jug and sugar basin, biscuits and bread and butter.

"We're trying a cooking experiment, mamma," said Judy. "Stanton is going to boil a book in that kettle, and Vivienne is to eat it buttered."

"It is cocoa that we are about to make, Mrs. Colonibel," said Vivienne; "we shall only be a short time."

The lady smiled benevolently upon them and proceeded on her way upstairs.

"Talk to us about your beloved France, Vivienne," pleaded Judy, a few minutes later, when they were seated around the fire drinking their cocoa. "Tell us about beautiful Touraine and the castles of the Loire. No, begin with the crowd on the Newhaven boat, Vivienne, and the French-

women that had no berths and had to lie on the floor. They were deathly ill, Stanton, and cried out '*Oh la, la, la, la, la,*' and '*Ha yi, yi, yi, yi, yi,*' and '*Je meurs! Tout cela va se passer*'; and one of them lost her artificial teeth and couldn't find them."

Vivienne smiled at the remembrance. "It seems but yesterday," she said dreamily, "that we landed in Dieppe, and the people ran across from the shops to our train, bringing us soups and milk and coffee. You cannot imagine, Mr. Armour, how very strange and yet familiar it appeared to me—the French faces and language. It was as if I had been asleep all my life and had just waked up."

"Go on, dear Vivienne; the journey to Paris."

"I don't know why it is," said Vivienne, with an apologetic smile bestowed on Mr. Armour, "but Judy never wearies of tales of France."

"It is because I hope to go there some day," said Judy triumphantly; "to visit every place that you have been in. You need not stare at me, Stanton; I am going. Proceed, dear Vivienne, describe to him the lovely scenery on the way to Paris and quaint old Orléans."

"Did you send me to Orléans because my father's ancestor, Guillaume Delavigne, had come from there?" said Vivienne to Mr. Armour.

"Partly; also on account of the good Protestant school in the town, where the facilities for studying

French would be better than in Paris where there are so many English people."

She looked gratefully at him. He had thought somewhat of her pleasure. It had not been all business and sternness with him as she had at first imagined. She talked on disjointedly for some time and replied to Judy's abrupt questions; then she got up with a quiet, "Now we must say good-night."

"Ah! not yet, not yet," pleaded the girl; "you have not come to the *château* of the Lacy d'Entrevilles."

Vivienne stood firm. "Some other time," she said smiling. "Let us go now," and Judy, grumbling a little, prepared to obey her, though she cast her eyes about the room as if seeking an excuse to remain.

"Stanton," she said amiably, "come up and have afternoon tea with us to-morrow, will you?"

"With pleasure," he said with equal amiability.

"You're a good boy," said Judy condescendingly. "I'll kiss you for that. Bend your proud neck; I haven't kissed you for a long time."

With a little squeal of delight she felt herself lifted off her feet. "Oh, put me down," she said laughingly; "I don't like to leave *terra firma*. Now say good-night to Vivienne. Kiss her too," she added mischievously.

Armour gave her a look that made her limp ex-

peditiously out into the hall. Then he extended his hand toward Vivienne.

What was the matter with the girl? Her happy gentle demeanor had suddenly turned into stiff reserve and her face was deathly pale.

"You must not!" she exclaimed, when he made a step toward her and extended his hand.

"Must not what?" he asked in surprise. Then her meaning flashed upon him. She thought that he was going to act upon Judy's suggestion.

"Can you imagine that I would?" he said hastily; "that I would be so, so——"

He was still hesitating for a word, when she drew her fingers from him and hurried away.

He remained rooted to the floor in acute surprise. Just for an instant the girl's admirable self-control had given way. There had been a flash of the eye, a trembling of the lip. "Something must have disturbed her," he muttered. "It could not be possible that—no, never. She would not fancy me, a man so much older. And yet it would be just like one of the tricks that fate plays us. If she did, if I were a revengeful man, what an opportunity for me. Stuff and nonsense! What am I thinking of?" and he threw himself in his favorite chair for reflection.

CHAPTER XXII

STARGARDE'S MOTHER

A STRONG north wind raged like a wild beast over the peninsula on which the city of Halifax is built, driving before it a blinding snow storm. Up and down, backward and forward, the wind whipped the white flakes, till it was a difficult matter to tell whether they came from earth or sky.

Out on the harbor the wind screamed madly and flung the snowy crystals into the teeth of perplexed mariners who were trying to make their wharves, causing them to shake their heads impatiently, for the snow is a blanket for them, while fog is but a curtain.

Not many people were about the streets. A few pedestrians whose business forced them to go abroad, went with bent heads and umbrellas under their arms. The unfortunates who were driving, had somewhat the appearance of distressed birds trying to tuck their heads under their wings.

The wind shrieked and howled about square-roofed Pinewood, but none of the inmates of the house came out to be tortured by it. It hurled sheets of snow against the double windows, but the

stanch glass would not yield, and the dry and powdery particles would not cling to the smooth surface, so the wind had not even the poor satisfaction of shutting out the light of day from the house.

With a sob of rage it tried to shake the sober pines. But they had stood the shock of countless winter storms and only slightly bending their stiff bodies and nodding their green heads, with loud sighs and murmurs warned the wild wind that he would find no sport with them.

Roaring wrathfully, the wind swept over the wood and under the trees of the avenue and up the long, bare road leading to the town. Here at least he would find a victim in the solitary occupant of a sleigh jogging slowly out to the Arm.

Sweeping up snow from the road, pouring down flakes from above, curling, twisting, and howling about the head of the patient quadruped, the malicious wind went; but horse and driver, though blinded, smothered, and half covered with the snowy atoms, stood the onset firmly. The driver did not even pull up his horse, but kept moving on slowly as before.

The wind in a last burst of fury swept out to sea. There at least he could do some damage.

The man in the sleigh laughed to himself and put up his head a little way from his high, fur collar to look about him. One glance was enough.

He drew back his head and said quietly, "Get on, Polypharmacy; you know where we're going. Sun or rain, wind or calm, it's all one to us."

Not to the bedside of some dangerously sick person was Dr. Camperdown hastening, but to have a tedious conversation on imaginary ailments with a rich and fanciful patient.

"She's a nuisance, that old Mrs. Prodgers," he soliloquized as he turned Polypharmacy's head toward the south. "Sent me word yesterday she was dying. That means she has a headache today. Hallo, there's Stargarde," as a woman's figure passed before his horse's head and hurried down the snowy road forming the southern boundary of Pinewood. The grove of pines pressed up close to the wall at this side of the house, and lower down, nearer the Arm, was a small gate often used by Colonel Armour's friends who approached his place of residence from the south and wished to save themselves a longer walk around by the avenue.

"She must be going down to the cottage," pursued Dr. Camperdown. "She's crazy to come out in this deep snow. She'll wet her feet, and wet feet and cold feet are the cause of a third of the miseries the feminine part of this town is subject to, if they only knew it. Stargarde, Stargarde!" and he lifted up his voice; "shall I wait and drive you home?"

The woman quickened her pace to a run, and

plunging through the snow, was quickly at the gate in the wall which she hastily opened and passed through.

"Doesn't want to see me," he muttered. "Very good. I can wait," and he resignedly drove on.

About five o'clock the patient Polypharmacy, at his master's command, drew up in front of the Pavilion. "I won't throw the rug over you, Polypharmacy," said Dr. Camperdown, "for I'm not going to stay. Stargarde isn't home. Will leave this tonic for Zeb, and return in a jiffy. Hallo, what's this?"

By this time the snow had ceased falling. A brilliantly cold and beautiful winter sunset adorned the western sky. Straggling lines of men with shovels invaded the houses of the city, begging for the privilege of clearing the snow from the sidewalks, and various citizens who had been kept indoors all day by the severity of the storm now ventured forth for a stroll before darkness settled upon the town.

Camperdown's exclamation was caused by a small procession coming down the street. Six old men and three old women were creeping, halting, and limping along in single file through the snow, and turned in at the entrance to the Pavilion as if to go to Stargarde's rooms.

"Who are these and whence do they come?" he asked a small boy in red mittens who was alter-

nately watching him and trying to make snowballs out of the dry and powdery snow which refused to stick together.

"I guess Miss Turner's having a cripple tea," said the boy. "She often does. The cripples likes to come together, 'cause they can talk about their arms and legs."

"Miss Turner isn't at home," muttered Dr. Camperdown under his breath and hastened in after the cripples.

A little girl opened the door to him, and said that Miss Turner was in the kitchen, and he might go out there if he chose to do so.

He left the child to entertain the cripples, who were warming themselves by the fire and chatting amiably to each other, and passing into the kitchen he found Stargarde standing over a huge pot of soup that was simmering on the stove.

"That is good soup," she said emphatically and lifted a spoonful to taste it. "Oh, how do you do, Brian?"

"Have you been out this afternoon?" he asked abruptly.

She lifted her clear eyes to his face. "No, I have not."

"There's not another woman in the town with a figure like yours," he said irrelevantly.

"Isn't there?" she said smilingly. Then looking about to see that they were alone: "Brian, my

friend, do not be annoyed with me if I tell you that you are coming here far too often lately."

He was annoyed, in spite of her caution, and showed it plainly.

"You know I am not one to fear the opinion of the world when I think the opinion is likely to be a wrong one," she went on with a calmness and sweetness that did much to subdue the opposition in his mind; "but I am a single woman living alone. Society is hard on women, unjustly so sometimes; but there are certain safeguards erected which are necessary, and which we should respect. You are neither my brother nor my lover that you should come here so often. I have never yet been lightly spoken of, dear Brian, in all my comings and goings through the city. You would be the last one to bring reproach upon me——"

He muttered something about coming to see Zeb.

"Zeb is well now," she went on; "and Brian, she is one of my anxieties at present. What is to become of her? She refuses to go back to her parents. The mother has sent for her again and again. Zeb is not happy with me. She still loves me, but you have the chief place in her affections. She has worshiped you ever since that day you saved her from that man. I think I never saw such infatuation, and she is so quiet about it. You would scarcely have suspected it if I had not told you."

"Scarcely."

"I was talking to her this morning of God's love for her, but she told me scornfully to stop. If God had loved her he would have made you her father instead of that man Gilberto."

"Am I then as old as that?" asked Dr. Camperdown wistfully.

Stargarde laughed merrily. "Zeb is only ten, Brian."

"I see you have some plan in your head," he said. "What is it?"

"I wish you would adopt her," said Stargarde with sweet audacity.

Camperdown burst into such a roar of laughter that Stargarde was obliged to take him into the pantry to continue their conversation, lest the cripples should be startled by his merriment.

"She is so odd," said Stargarde pleadingly. "To-day she has gone off somewhere, because I had the cripples coming. She wants one person's time and attention. Oh, Brian, save that little lamb for the dear Lord."

"I have one lamb called Hannah," drily. "Two lambs of that calibre in my pasture would be running their heads together."

"I have a family of orphans coming to me next week," Stargarde went on. "Zeb will be furious. She hates other children. Brian, for Christ's sake save this little child."

Camperdown shook himself with impatience. "Suppose I got her, who would take care of her?"

"Old Mrs. Trotley; you know she is the last survivor of one of the oldest families of Halifax, a dear, gentle, old lady. Everything has failed her; she has just given up her little shop——"

"So you want to foist her in on me?"

"Brian, you were railing against the city the other day for not taking better care of the children of the poor. Now, here you are not willing to do your duty by one of them."

"You are an impracticable schemer. Stargarde, I wish you could see how beautiful your hair is against that black jug."

She paid no attention to the latter part of his speech. "Well, Brian, will you do this at least for me? Go to Zeb's mother and ask her if she won't give the child up to me. Any reasonable arrangement I am willing to make. They are not fit people to have the custody of a young girl, and if all else fails, remind her that I shall appeal to the law which takes children from unworthy guardianship. I ask you to do this because the woman avoids me strangely, and will not speak to me."

"When shall I go?"

"Any time, but soon."

"I'll go now," with unexpected alacrity, and he darted from the room.

Ten minutes later he stood wiping the perspira-

tion from his heated brow, and wondering whether he was still in the possession of his senses, or whether he had fallen a prey to some hideous nightmare.

He had mounted to the crazy attic den which for some weeks had been little Zeb's home, and had been bidden to enter. Before him he saw a bit of tawdry womanhood at which he gazed in stupid and angry fascination.

A transformation had been effected in Zeb's mother. Her old rags were gone, and she had been trying to dress herself like a lady. Was it a ghastly, bedraggled imitation of his own Stargarde that he saw there, or did his eyes deceive him? If he could imagine Stargarde twenty years older than she was, a ruined, hardened, degraded creature, a drunkard dragged through the mud of several large cities, he might have conjured up something like this bold and hard-featured woman of unusually large stature who sat in a rickety arm-chair by the fire, her dress twitched aside to show the cheap embroidery of her petticoat, steam rising in a cloud from her wet boots that she held pressed close against the bars of the grate.

The most horrible part of the thing to him was that she saw his emotion, and plainly understood the cause of it. "Do you think I look like her?" she asked complacently.

There was no light in the room except that com-

ing from the fire, and he stood a little farther back in the shadow, so that she might not read so well the expression of his face, nor hear the sharp click in his throat which was all he could manage by way of reply to her.

She shrugged her shoulders, and coolly drinking from a cup that she held in her hand, said in a coarse and cynical voice: "You will excuse me; I am having afternoon tea to refresh myself after a long walk. Sorry I can't offer you some, but really I don't know where to lay my hand on another cup and saucer."

She had been drinking something stronger than tea, he could tell by her voice, probably at the moment she had some brandy in her cup, but she was not by any means overcome by what she had been taking, and was able to carry on a conversation.

He mastered his emotion, and moistening his lips, which were as dry as if some one had strewn ashes across them, said sternly: "I came here to see on what terms you will part with the child Zeb."

"Who wants her?" she asked sneeringly.

"I do."

"What for?"

"To adopt."

"Will you bring her up a lady?"

"Yes."

"I suppose the lady of the Pavilion put you up to this."

At this the man's two eyes glared at her with so fierce and red a light from under his shaggy eyebrows that the woman, bold as she was, saw that she would spoil her bargain if she persisted in this reference.

"You're a gentleman," she went on composedly; "in other words a devil, and if you want anything from me you've got to pay dear for it."

In unspeakable loathing it seemed as if he could find nothing to say to her, and he made a gesture for her to continue.

"I might set a price on her," she went on in mocking, reflective tones, "and you'd pay me to-day, and to-morrow it would be gone. No; you'd better be my banker for life. I draw on you when I choose."

He moved forward a few steps as if to leave the room, but she cried, "Stop."

"I'm used to your class," she said with a frightful sneer, "and I know what's passing in your mind. You're saying to yourself, 'The woman is a liar, and I'd better have nothing to do with her. The police will get the child from her, and then I'll have a clear start.' But, my fine gentleman," leering hideously at him, "don't you, nor the young lady down yonder set the police on me for your own sakes. I'll make it lively for you if you do. I'm going to leave this dull little hole soon and go back to Montreal. Not to please you, but to suit myself.

I came here for a purpose. I've no reason to serve you, but if it's any good to you to know it, I've no intention of meddling with you or the young lady yonder. You let me alone, and I'll let you alone. But I'm hard up now; you give me a certain sum down, and tell me some place in Montreal where I can go quarterly, and we'll call it a bargain."

Dr. Camperdown drew his breath hard and fast. "Is Zeb your lawful child?"

"Yes; Gilberto is the only husband I ever had; a beauty, isn't he?"

In a few rapid words, for the sight of the woman was so hateful to him that he could hardly endure staying in the room with her, Camperdown concluded the agreement with her. "On the day you leave Halifax," he said, "come to me and I'll give you a further sum. The sooner you come, the more you'll get."

He turned on his heel, his foot was on the threshold of the door, when he heard in a hissing voice close to his ear, "Did you ever hate any one?"

Looking over his shoulder he saw the nearest approach to a fiend incarnate that it had ever been his bad fortune to behold. The woman had risen from her chair, drawn herself up to her great height, and with hand laid on her breast was staring before her, not at him, her face convulsed by a fierce and diabolical rage.

"You are nothing," she said wildly, "Zeb is noth-

ing, Gilberto is nothing, the lady nothing, to me; I despise you all, but that man, king of devils, how I hate him! If I could see him burning in torment"—and she broke into a stream of fierce imprecations, compared with which Mammy Juniper's ravings were but as milk and water complaints.

"It is hell to me here," she cried, striking her breast violently, "to know how to torture him. I could kill him, but what is that. One pang and all is over. But to see him twist and writhe in suffering. That is what I want. I have been to see him to-day—other days. I said, 'I starve and freeze.' What did he say? 'Woman, who are you? get you gone.' O Lord, Lord!" and throwing herself in her chair, she rocked to and fro in speechless agony.

The gaudy bonnet slipped over the back of her chair, and as her paroxysm increased, her coarse, light hair fell down, and from the rapid motion of her body to and fro, whipped wildly over her head.

Wrapped in a horrible spell, Camperdown gazed silently at her for a few minutes. Then he slammed the door together, and rushing down the crazy steps at imminent risk of breaking his limbs, quickly found himself in the street.

"O God," he said, putting up one of the most fervent prayers of his life, when he stood once more under the clear, cold canopy of heaven, and lifted his eyes to the first twinkling stars of the even-

ing, "keep my pure, white lily from a knowledge of this!"

He had left Polypharmacy on the opposite side of the street. As he crossed over to him, and lifted his weight to put in the sleigh he noticed a little, lonely figure, that moved away from the horse at his approach, and leaning against the wire fence that bounds the Citadel Hill, watched him silently.

"Zeb," he exclaimed, peering at her in the half light; "is that you?"

"Yes," she said quietly, but without moving.

"Come here, little girl," he said with great tenderness in his voice, "and get in the sleigh with me."

Without a word of demur the child took her seat beside him, and allowed him to wrap the wolfskin rug around her.

"Am glad I met you," he said. "Have just been seeing your mother. She says you may come and live with me, if you choose. Will you, little Zeb?"

He was not by any means a nervous man, but he shivered at the look the child gave him. She wished to know whether he was in earnest.

"My house is lonely," he said; "I want a little girl to make it cheerful. You will come, won't you?"

The child burst into a passion of tears in which she tried to restrain herself in a curious, unchildlike fashion, finally slipping off the seat and sitting at his feet with her head buried in the robe.

When he arrived at the Pavilion he tried to persuade her to come out, but by various unmistakable signs she gave him to understand that she would not leave him to go back to Stargarde.

His face twitched with a variety of emotions. He requested Stargarde to come to the door of her rooms, for the cripples were at tea and he would not go in. "I have Zeb," he said hurriedly. "I'll take her—the mother consents; they'll sign a contract. Child's in my sleigh, and I can't get her out."

Stargarde clasped her hands; a lovely, rosy flush glorified her face. "Oh, I am so glad! Thank the Lord for that."

"House will be cold and Hannah'll be mad," he said; "but I've got to take her."

"Zeb won't mind," said Stargarde joyfully, "if she's with you; you don't know her faithful heart."

"What is Mrs. Trotley's address?" he asked.

She gave it to him, he looking at her the meanwhile in inexpressible tenderness. "Stargarde," softly, "I'll not come here so much. Don't want to bother you. You know what brings me."

"Yes, yes," she said hanging her head. "Dear Brian, it grieves me to grieve you."

"I know it," hastily. "But don't grieve even for me, my darling. I would like your life to have no care. But if trouble does come upon you, you'll send for me?"

"Yes, yes, I will."

"Nothing would ever separate us," he said in a voice vibrating with emotion. "Nothing but your own free will. You are so fair and lovely; always a flower blooming amid dark surroundings."

"Thank you," she said gayly; "that is a pretty sentiment."

With a smile of ineffable affection, he gently pushed her inside the door. "Go in, my darling; you will take cold. Don't tire yourself with the cripples. Good-night."

"Zeb," he said, when he returned to the sleigh, "come up here, I want to talk to you," and fishing under the wolfskin he drew her up and set her beside him.

"I think I'd like to be a reformer, Zeb, it's so easy to go about telling other people what they ought to do. But when it comes home to self, that's a different matter. Zeb, I'm not what I ought to be."

"Yer a good man," said the child half sulkily, "if there be's any."

"Thank you, little Zeb; would you mind saying 'you' instead of 'yer'? Your mother talks good English, but yours is a little defective."

"You, you," repeated the child under her breath. "I'll say it, doctor."

He continued talking to her, but amid her brief remarks and the many stirring arrangements he

made that evening for her comfort, there was before him all the time the ugly picture of the big, light-haired woman sitting by the fire, drinking her tea and drying her feet, her thick lips moving in the cynical, hardened fashion in which she had talked to him.

CHAPTER XXIII

ON MARKET DAY

JUST as the city clocks struck ten on the last Saturday morning of January of the year of which we write, Dr. Camperdown came down the steps and into the street from the large, stone building known as the post office.

His hands were full of letters and papers that he had just taken from his private box in the post office, and which he stuffed into his pockets, as he carefully picked his steps among the various boxes, and bundles, and numberless things in the way of encumbrances with which the sidewalk was almost blocked.

The scene was not new to him. He was looking about him absently rather than attentively, till he caught sight of Stargarde coming over the crossing from the near Provincial Building, accompanied by her solemn black dog. She had a little basket on her arm, and was evidently about to follow the custom of many Halifax housekeepers who on Saturday mornings do their marketing themselves.

A glad light, almost instantly repressed, leaped to his face when he saw her. "Good-morning,"

he said, quietly touching his cap, and acting as though he were about to pass her by.

"Are you not going to speak to me?" she inquired with a gracious smile and extending a hand to him. "I wish to praise you a little."

"For what?" he inquired, opening his eyes, through which he had been looking in a squinting fashion at her.

"For your goodness in not coming to see me. I think I shall have to start a system of cards of merit, and bestow them upon you at regular intervals."

He smiled peculiarly. "I mustn't take too much credit to myself; you have given me a new interest in life."

"Yes; Zeb. I am longing to talk to you about her. Can you not walk about with me while I do my marketing? then we can have a little talk afterward. You don't stay in your office Saturday mornings, I think."

"No," and hypocritically concealing his extravagant joy, he turned and walked beside her. "You have a very high color this morning, Stargarde," he said demurely. "I hope that you are not feverish.

"Why, it is cold, Brian, very cold for Halifax. Don't you feel the chill in the air?"

"No," indifferently, and swinging open his coat. "I am never cold; don't feel a lowering of the

temperature any more than our friends the market women. Just look at them, Stargarde," and with a sudden interest in his surroundings, now that he was no longer alone, he pointed to the unique spectacle before them.

The people in the market on this particular morning were mostly colored. Their rough sleds, many of which were drawn by oxen, were ranged along the gutters close to the pavements. In most cases the animals had been taken out, and were fastened to telegraph poles, railings, anywhere that the ingenious Negro could find a rod or a staff around which to twine a rope. A few of the oxen were tethered to the tailboards of their sleds and stood patiently munching wisps of hay, and surveying their owners with kind, pathetic eyes.

One woman who had had the good fortune to dispose of her stock, was just about leaving the market, skillfully guiding through the crowded street her tandem pair, consisting of a cow and an attenuated horse, the horse leading.

"Look at her," said Camperdown. "Happy as a queen! She has sold her stuff, and sits enthroned on a bundle of old clothes, and a few packages of flour and sugar and a jug of molasses that she's taking home to her pickaninnies. You won't see many 'carriage ladies' with an expression like that. What's this? 'Cow for sail,'" and he read the placard hanging over the neck of a dirty white animal tied

to a telegraph pole. "When does that cow sail?" to a melancholy-looking Negro standing near, whose two huge, protruding lips curled back like pink-lined breakers over the foam-like whiteness of a jagged reef of teeth.

"She'll sail now, mister, if you can raise de wind," said the man with a depressed yet amiable smile.

"Ah, Brian, the biter bitten," observed Stargarde laughingly.

"He's gut out three sheets now, I b'lieve, missis," the Negro went on inexorably. "You white folkses be always a makin' fun of us Niggers," with an apologetic grin.

"Oh, take in sail, take in sail," said Camperdown, pointing to the obnoxious placard.

"Guess I better, if'n it's goin' to send all the white people into gales of high sterricks," said the colored man agreeably. "You be's the secon' or third lot what has come to anchor here, gigglin' and laughin'. What's wrong wid the card, missis?"

"Only one word," said Stargarde gently, "which is usually spelt s-a-l-e, rather than s-a-i-l, when one has anything to sell."

"Thank you kin'ly, missis. I'll altercate it," and he lazily watched the two people going on their way.

"Here are eggs," said Camperdown, "big, white ones, Stargarde, and butter like gold."

Stargarde stopped beside a shy-faced French woman, who was standing guard over a wagon, and asked her how much her eggs were a dozen.

"Dwenty-vive cent, madam."

"I will take two dozen, if you please, and four prints of butter."

Camperdown looked at the woman, and seeing that he was looking at her, she immediately dropped her eyes. She was tall and neatly dressed, and wore a black shawl over her hair and pinned under her chin. "A Chezzencooker," he muttered, then aloud, "What else have you?"

"Smells, zur; dirty sents a ztring."

"Don't want any of them; enough bad odors in Halifax now."

"Smelts, Brian," corrected Stargarde. "He doesn't understand French," she said kindly to the woman.

"Beg pardon, I do; once got a prize at school for extensive knowledge of the language. Needn't tell her I was the only one in the class," in a lower tone.

"And you have ducks, and chickens, and cherry bark tied up in neat, little bundles, haven't you?" Stargarde went on; "also woolen socks and sarsaparilla. You must get some of the latter, Brian. Hannah will make you some tea. She says it is good for the blood."

"Give me ten bundles, madam," he said obligingly.

"I have only vive," said the Frenchwoman, raising her eyes just long enough to glance at the man, who seemed to be a very bold kind of monster to her.

"Very well, give me the five; and in addition those little brooms. They will do for Hannah to sweep her hearth."

"I buy zem for myself, zur," said the woman hastily. "We make no brooms; 'tis the Neegurs that does."

"Ah," politely. "I understand. *Infra dignitatem.* Thank you, madam," and he put his parcel of sarsaparilla under his arm. "Whom does she remind you of?" he asked Stargarde as they went on.

"Vivienne, naturally; but Brian, the Chezzencook people are not the same as the Digby and Yarmouth French, are they?"

"No; a different lot. Came here at another time. French though."

"Oh, yes; I know that. What is happening here? Brian, let us stand back and watch them. I do love colored people."

They withdrew a little from the moving stream of passers-by on the sidewalk, and accompanied by the dog placed their backs against the building. In front of them was a group of colored men and women, all warmly bundled in odds and ends of clothing, and laughing, chattering, and joking in

the "wisely careless, innocently gay" fashion peculiar to their race.

"Small wonder that they do not feel the cold," said Camperdown. "Just look at the clothes they have on. Talk about Edinburgh fishwives, they only wear seventeen petticoats. This stout dame has on seventy at least, haven't you, auntie?" he asked, as a middle-aged colored woman approached them to get a basket, which was like a little, gay garden spot on the frozen snow, so filled was it with bunches of wintergreen and verdant ferns, dyed grasses, long and feathery, and heaps of red maple leaves, carefully pressed and waxed to preserve their flaming tints.

"Hasn't I what, chile?" she asked, taking her short, black pipe from her mouth, and regarding him with a beaming, ebony face.

"Aren't you pretty well protected against the inclemency of the weather?" he inquired meekly.

"I don't know what 'clemency be, but the weather, good lan', I knows that. Has to dress accordin'. Look at me feet, chile," and she held up a substantial pair of men's long-legged boots. "Inside that I've got on socks. Inside that agin, women's stockin's. And I've got on other wearin' apparels belongin' to men too, and Jemima Jane's dress, and Grandmother Brown's and me own ole frock, and on me head I puts a cloud, and on me cloud I puts a cap, and on me arms three pair o'

stockin' legs, and on me hans two pair o' mitts, an' over all I puts me bes' Sunday-go-to-meetin' mantle, what I wears to the baptizins, an' here an' there," mysteriously, "a few other happenins," and bending over her basket she closed her thick lips on her pipe.

Camperdown watched her gravely.

"If you was a colored gemman, an' had to ris' in the middle o' the night, an' bile your kettle, an' feed your pig, an breakfus your young uns, an hitch your ox," she said presently, straightening herself up and laughing all over her face at him, "an drive a thought o' twelve mile to town, an' stan' till gun fire, and perform your week's buyin', an' peregrenize home over the Preston roads, which is main bad this weather, you'd habit yourself mebbe worsen I do, an' not look so handsum nuther."

Roguishly winking at him, she elevated her long basket to the top of her head and walked away, her back as straight as a soldier's. With never a hand put up to steady the nodding, swaying garden spot atop of her head, she guided herself among the crowd of people, her manifold tier of petticoats bobbing behind her like the tail of a gigantic bird, and presently disappeared.

"Good souls, those colored people," ejaculated Camperdown, looking after her. "They live on their spirits. Oh, look here, Stargarde," and he drew some envelopes from his pocket. "Flora is

chameleonizing. She's going to give a dance for ma'm'selle. Read that invitation card. I frightened her into civility."

"Poor Vivienne," said Stargarde.

"Happy Vivienne ; she enjoys herself. It's marvelous to see the coolness with which she treats Flora—the right line of conduct to adopt. If she were meek and humble, Flora would impose upon her shamefully. They're going to have some lively times at Pinewood, and that girl will be the leading spirit. I suppose you've noticed that Stanton is taking rather more interest than usual in her?"

"Yes ; take care, Brian ; take care. You are playing at match-making, and it is a dangerous game."

"Well," stoutly, "as you women nowadays are so busy attending to departments of public good, what is there for men to do but take up the private ones, such as the making of marriages? Don't alarm yourself though, I don't do much ; only say a word now and then."

"But your words have weight."

"I am glad they have," sarcastically, "with some people."

"In your zeal for Stanton's interests I hope you will do nothing to bias Vivienne ; she may fancy Valentine."

"Is thy servant a sneak?" he asked in an injured tone of voice. "And that is Stanton's affair, not

mine. He will be as just as the Lord Chancellor; but ma'm'selle doesn't love Valentine. He's too young; Stanton is just the age for her; he isn't so old as his years. He got frozen when he was a lad, and has stayed frozen ever since. Frost preserves you know. I want to see him melt now, and dance for some woman the way the rest of us do."

"Brian, it makes me nervous to hear you planning so surely on a thing that may never come to pass."

"Stanton is all right," he continued, rather as if he were soliloquizing; "but you women are uncertain qualities. That he will fall in love with her is a foregone conclusion. He rarely goes anywhere; never has been brought into intimacy with any woman for any length of time; propinquity makes a man either hate or love a woman. He's disliked her long enough; can't keep it up. There will be a tremendous rebound that will nearly shake the life out of him; but will she reciprocate?"

"I don't see how she can help it," said Stargarde impulsively; and the mere thought of Stanton beloved and happy, touched her tender heart and filled her eyes with tears.

"Nor I," said Camperdown, with mock enthusiasm. "Such a sweet and tender bit of marble as he is! Such a loving block of wood! But you women like such creatures."

Stargarde paid no attention to him. "And Val-

entine too," she went on earnestly, "I do wish that he could fall under the influence of some good girl."

"If he wants a good girl let him be a good boy," coolly. "That's your own doctrine, Stargarde. Pray don't make an exception in favor of Valentine, when you've been so firm with the rest of the world. You're one of the new women, you know. 'A white life for two,' isn't that your motto? Same thorny path of virtue for men and women."

"Not thorny, Brian."

"Sometimes I've found it so. Just think of all the pleasant little dissipations I might have had if you hadn't been watching me with that lynx eye of yours. No use to come to you and say, 'Dear creature, will you take a tenth place in my affections, after cards, wine, and other things not worth mentioning?' I know what's in your mind now. You're a true woman and have a sneaking fondness for vagabonds. You love Stanton; but you think he's a strong man and can stand alone. You adore Valentine, and if either brother gets ma'm'selle, you think it should be the weakling, whose tottering footsteps need guidance. Come now, tell me, would you give the French girl to Valentine if it depended on you?"

She hesitated. "Not as he is now; but we are commanded to forgive those who repent."

"Repent; nonsense, my dar—my dear Miss

Turner. Can repentance change the corpuscles in a man's blood? He sha'n't have her, dissipated young scamp that he is. You wouldn't allow it yourself if it came to the pinch. No; let ma'm'selle shake him out of his abominable state of self-complacency, if you will, but no marriage. A sisterly affection is what she must bestow upon him. She'll tell him some wholesome truths if she gets to know him better. I hope she may. He's been stepping over thorns all his life. I'd like to see him lie down now, and have a good roll in them."

"Brian!" and Stargarde looked appealingly into the piercing eyes of her tormentor and lover.

"It would do him good," he said, "and we'd help to dress his wounds afterward. And the little French girl would be amiable enough to help to give consolation."

Stargarde sighed. "Why do you so often call her little? She is tall."

"Oh, it's a mannish *façon de parler.* Men always say that about women they like."

"Do they?" wonderingly. "I haven't noticed it."

"I dare say not. Men as a rule don't like big women."

"Indeed!"

"No; they do not. I heard a man the other day speaking of a lovely creature, 'But,' he said, 'she is too big to love.'"

Stargarde looked disturbed. "Was I the woman, Brian?" she said sweetly, almost childishly.

"Well—I would have throttled him if he had said anything else."

"And do you find me so—so immense?" drawing herself up to the full height of her charming and exquisitely proportioned figure.

"Immense; yes. Quite immense."

She scanned his face with an intentness that gave him the keenest pleasure, though he deceitfully pretended to be very much absorbed by a passing sleigh.

"Stargarde," he said, when the sleigh had passed them, "you were criticising me just now, will you allow me to perform the same kind office for you?"

"Certainly," with the utmost cheerfulness in tone and manner.

"You said that I am getting frivolous. In your character too, I see signs of weakening. There is rather an alarming symptom showing itself, of deference to the opinions of other people who are very much less clever than you, myself for example. You have always been so strong, Stargarde; have stood alone. Now you are becoming weak, deteriorating, getting to be like other women. I would check it, if I were you, this inclination toward the commonplace, the—the childish, if I may mention the word in your connection. Per-

haps, though, the mental weakness follows upon a physical one. Aren't you well and happy?"

She was very much discomposed. "Yes, Brian, I am well and happy; yet, I don't know what it is lately, there seems to be a vague disquiet about me. Perhaps I have been doing more than I should."

"That must be it," soothingly. "You are working too hard. I will give you a tonic. Now let us walk down toward the harbor and talk about Zeb. You received my note?"

"Yes," the expression of her face suddenly changing, "and I was so glad that I cried over it."

"If your gladness had taken the form of coming to see her, I should have been better pleased," he said complainingly.

"I decided that it was better to leave her wholly to you for a time."

"Look at this," he said, drawing a paper from his inside pocket. "Isn't she going a pretty pace for a sometime ragamuffin?"

It was a milliner's bill for twenty dollars, for one felt hat trimmed with ostrich plumes.

"Oh, Brian, what did you do about it?"

"Paid it. You must know that my Zeb, or Zilla as she prefers to be called—she says Zeb is vulgar—has fully made up her mind to become a young lady of fashion. She hasn't got farther than the skin of decent people yet, and clothes to her are the token of

respectability inside and out. I am reading 'Sartor Resartus' to her, but it hasn't made much impression yet. Starting on the road to fashion she has resolved to drag me after her. I suppose you didn't notice my new raiment?"

"Yes, I did," said Stargarde, surveying the remarkably neat check of his tweed suit. "I never saw you look so smart, Brian."

"Zilla hadn't been in the house three days before she ransacked my wardrobe. Said it was—well, Mrs. Trotley says she swore like a 'longshoreman at the shabbiness of it. She stationed herself at the window and took observations. Little minx, like a Halifax girl born and bred, she has taken to scarlet fever as naturally as a fish uses its fins. Dotes on the military; would put me in a uniform if she could. Next to uniform she admires morning clothes of officers. She sketched one fellow top to toe for me, collar, tie, trousers, coat, boots; had her pencil and paper behind window curtains; then badgered me till I went to the tailor's. Told her I wouldn't ape any man's garments, but would buy new fit-out. Have a collar on that almost saws my neck off, see," and he held up his head. "Do you like the pattern of my tie, Stargarde?"

"Very much," said the woman laughingly. "It is too delightful to think of Zeb—Zilla's dictating to you."

"I knew you'd enjoy it. Little witch made me

go to church with her, to show off my new things she said. She is a fearful heathen. Wish you could have seen us Sunday filing into church, I and my respectable family. Mrs. Trotley always looks, as she is, a lady. Zilla is like a demon in frocks, with those wild eyes of hers. She drew a long breath when we got inside the doors, as if she were going into a shower bath, clutched my hand, and regularly mowed down the people with her eyes as she gazed defiantly about her. She would have slapped any one that laughed.

"I felt almost as queer—haven't been to church for months. Zilla got in a fearful tangle with the service, but she is not the child to quail before a ritual. All this week she has been sitting with prayer-book in her hand. Mrs. Trotley is teaching her to find places, and I hear 'Good Lord deliver us' and the 'Apostles' Creed' from every corner of the house. When ladies come to call on Mrs. Trotley she won't see them, or if she does, she talks French. I happened to be in the house the other afternoon—she had run to meet me, and two old Miss Bellinghams caught her. She rarely loses self-possession. '*C'mont allez-vous?*' she said in a meek, put-on-voice. Her French is remarkable, her own composition mostly. The like was never heard before nor will be again. 'Don't you talk English?' they asked. 'A leetle,' she replied; '*Je prefaire to parlee français.*' Poor little brat, she is

afraid that her vile English will give her away. She is taking utmost pains to speak well. Makes me correct every mistake."

"And she loves you, Brian," said Stargarde in a delighted voice and with flashing eyes.

"I suppose so. Follows me like a dog about the house. Embraces frequently. Makes my money fly too, which is proof of feminine affection. First day or two she was very quiet—not overcome, she has been about too much for that—but sizing us up. Then she began to overturn; old Hannah must go and live with her son. I put my foot down there. Hannah must stay. Zilla swore a little, but was pacified by an offer of two maids to attend properly to the house. New furniture has been bought, likewise flower pots, bird cages, and such trash. I expect she'll ruin me."

In silent ecstasy, Stargarde gazed at him. Then she tapped the paper in her hands. "What about this hat, Brian? Did you let her wear it?"

"No; she threw it in the fire. I told her ladies wore fine hats; children plain ones. She first got into a rage and danced and used bad language, then hurled plumes and hat into the grate, and herself at my boots."

"Could not Mrs. Trotley have prevented her from buying it?"

"The old lady is as wax in her hands. No one can manage her."

"But you, Brian, you can."

"Well, yes; I have to; she'd override everything."

"Are you going to send her to school?"

"Not yet. I give her lessons, and Mrs. Trotley helps her to learn them. She's the most indulgent bit of femininity that I could have found for Zilla."

"And you are pleased, Brian, that you took the child?"

"Yes; she has given me an object in life. I couldn't endure a stupid child. She is as smart as one of the saucy sparrows about our streets; she is a sparrow—and you are like one of those beautiful gulls circling in the pure air overhead," he thought to himself, taking care not to utter the latter sentiment aloud; "and I am like one of those big, ugly crows yonder on the beach," he reflected further, "hopping over his mates with eyes bent on the stones to see that he gets his share of the shellfish. And by and by the white-winged gull will come down and sit quietly beside that old crow. And he will slay mollusks for himself and her too. I beg your pardon; what were you saying?"

"That I would like to see Zilla. I will call tomorrow."

"Come this evening," hospitably, "and have dinner with us. I will telephone for ma'm'selle and Judy, if you will."

"Thank you," said Stargarde, critically examin-

ing his face to see whether there was any feverish anxiety visible that she should accept the invitation. There was not. "I really believe," she reflected, her blue eyes sparkling like the waves beyond them, "that the child is weaning him from me. I am overjoyed," and she really fancied that she was.

By the quick insight of love he was well aware of what was passing in her mind. "You little guess, beautiful bird," he thought, as he walked with his gaze bent on the ground, "why it is that your *protégée* has become the light of my eyes."

"Yes; I will come," she said at last. "I shall enjoy doing so."

"You will see a change in Zilla even in this short time. Regular diet and an untroubled mind are doing wonders for her. Her cheeks are filling out. Her hair, now that it is properly taken care of, looks no longer like Gorgon locks. I daresay she may turn out to be a beauty. Her eyes are not so civilized as ma'm'selle's, but when she gets that wild stare out of them, they will be just as attractive. That foreign streak in her blood makes her uncommon—an uncommon liar too. Wish I could get her to stop it."

"Does she tell many stories?"

"Not to me. She is an acute little liar. Rarely gets trapped. I told her the Lord would punish her if she didn't stop imposing on Mrs. Trotley and Hannah. She said that wouldn't be fair. If the Lord had

wanted her to be truthful he shouldn't have given her to her mother to bring up, for she told lies oftener than the truth. I reminded her that ladies didn't lie—may I be forgiven! That made a profound impression, and I can see an improvement. She won't steal. Says it is—no, I can't tell you what she said. Her language is forcible at times. She is brave—brave as a tigress; would kill any one, I think, that laid a hand on me."

"She will get over her faults in time," said Stargarde. "Think of her wild, undisciplined life so far. Oh, Brian, if I could only tell you what a noble thing you have done in taking Zeb. It is not the little, perishable body alone that you are caring for, but the immortal soul as well. There is something about the child that appeals to me strangely. I felt it to be a heart-breaking thing that she should be with those depraved creatures, her parents."

"Brutes," said Camperdown. "The devil's own. He will get them."

"Not the devil's own; the Lord's own, Brian. He has not given them up."

"I think he has—one of them."

"Which one?"

"The mother, Mrs. Frispi, as she calls herself."

"We shall see. Zilla's good fortune may make the mother more kindly disposed toward us. She may allow me to talk to her in time."

"I wish that you would let her alone," he said hastily.

"Nay, Brian, I cannot promise you that; and now I must go back to the Pavilion."

He stood, cap in hand, looking after her as she walked away with a light firm step.

"Very carefully I spread a net for you, beautiful bird," he muttered enjoyably; "and you slightly tangled your adored feet in it, and after you have fluttered awhile I will set you free. The best of it is you haven't a suspicion of it. You're dead in love, beautiful bird, and I'm trying to let you know it," and he chuckled to himself.

"She's saintly; very saintly," he went on, after a time; "makes me feel vicious by comparison. I guess I'll go to tease Stanton," and swinging on his heel he walked at a brisk pace along Water Street, grimy, dirty Water Street, smelling of fish and oil and tar, and having more individuality than all the other streets of the town put together.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN ANSWERED QUESTION

TRUCKS, low sleds, and huge wagons emerged in a steady stream from lanes leading down to the wharves, where ships great and small lay moored. Rumbling out of these lanes with much noise and cracking of whips from impatient drivers, these heavy vehicles were a constant menace to unwary passers-by.

Dr. Camperdown having relapsed into a reflective mood had a number of narrow escapes. Jumping aside just in time, he went on his way, brushing heedlessly along by sailors, hoarse-voiced captains of fishing craft who wore bright-colored scarfs around their throats, the few women who appeared in the street, and an occasional shivering child, running with a few cents in its hand to the nearest eating-place for something to supplement a late breakfast.

At frequent intervals he passed by clothing shops, whose dangling garments of oilskin, fur rugs, and woolen wraps formed numerous little arbors in front of their entrance doors. Once a swinging line of rough socks caught in his cap, was impa-

tiently swept aside, and fell to the ice and snow on the pavement. The irate shopkeeper rushed out, and sent a volley of bad language after him, which Camperdown listened to complacently, and then strode on without replying.

At last he arrived in front of the place he sought —a substantial, brick building with Armour & Son, Cobequid Warehouse, in gilt letters across its wide archway.

He wished to go down the wharf to Mr. Armour's office, and passing under the heads of a pair of mules that were dragging a load of barrels of flour out into the street, he followed a narrow, plank walk at the side of the building, occasionally glancing up as he did so at the rows of barred, prison-like windows above him.

"A more ponderous erection this, than the first one," he said half aloud. "Wonder how long it will stand? 'Till after poor Stanton is in his grave probably;" and opening a door before him, he stepped into a small passage which gave private entrance to Mr. Armour's office.

A tap at the door and he was permitted to enter by a curt, "Come in."

In a good-sized room of moderate height sat the virtual head of the Armour firm, a pen between his fingers, his eye engaged in running up and down the columns of an account book that he held propped up before him.

The doors of the massive safes sunk into the wall, stood half open ; inside could be seen in compartments, filed papers, rows of books, and small padlocked boxes. On the wall hung calendars, the signal service system of the port of Halifax, a map of Nova Scotia, and various memoranda relating to the business.

Camperdown approached the heavy table where Mr. Armour sat, and throwing his cap on it, pulled toward him one of the haircloth easy-chairs of the room, and said agreeably as he sat down, "Morning, Stanton. Is business progressing?"

"Yes," said Mr. Armour, a faint smile hovering about his lips.

He had just received news from his Jamaica agent of the profitable sale of some West Indian cargoes, and was feeling almost cheerful in consequence of it—the making of money being the one ray of sunlight in his joyless existence. However, he did not tell Dr. Camperdown this, and the latter went on :

"There's a point in the science of killing people, Stanton, that I'd like to have you know. When you tackle me, don't do it with cold steel, or frost and snow and icy atmosphere. If I'm going to be put out of the world, let me have an easy, comfortable going. Something warm and pleasant."

"I am at a loss to understand your meaning," said Armour in a cold voice.

"Drowning is a pleasant death," went on Camperdown inexorably; "or bleeding; cyanide of potassium kills a cat quickly. You can shoot a dog quicker than you can starve him. More agreeable to the dog too."

"Your jesting is unintelligible to me."

"I daresay," replied Camperdown. "Why don't you try to make ma'm'selle happier, Stanton?"

Armour scanned him silently.

"She's eating her heart out about something," said Camperdown with suspicious smoothness. "Those French people are all fire and suppressed passion. You don't understand them, Stanton."

"I have had some experience with French people," said Armour tranquilly.

"Well you don't understand women, anyway."

"And you do."

"Yes, I know just how to manage them. I know how to do most things. With the boundless conceit of the average man I think I could run the universe. Why don't you buy ma'm'selle some new gloves, Stanton? I noticed that she had on shabby ones the other day."

Armour burst into one of his rare and mirthless laughs. "Really, Camperdown, you are hard to suit with regard to this young lady. Is this the fifth or the sixth time that you have interviewed me about her? Would you accept a position as lady's maid out at Pinewood?"

"No, I wouldn't," said his listener with a growl.

"I want to do my duty by her," said Armour. "She has always had a handsome allowance. I rarely notice a woman's dress; but she certainly would have attracted my attention had she been imperfectly clad."

"Do you ever look at her, Stanton?"

"Yes; occasionally."

"You do not like her?"

"I really cannot see that my feeling toward her matters in the slightest degree," said Armour evasively. "By the way, now you are here, will you prescribe something for me? I am having insomnia again."

"Go to bed early; eat more; and when you leave your office leave your business behind you, not take it home and work half the night in your library," and Dr. Camperdown surveyed his patient in great moodiness. "I won't give you powders, so you needn't ask me. You're breaking natural laws and have been for years. There'll be a collapse some day."

Mr. Armour's quiet self-possession did not leave him, and he returned his friend's gaze with tranquil eyes.

Something in his glance reminded Camperdown of Stargarde, and a softer mood came over him. "Stanton," he said, and he stretched one hand across the table, "what is the matter with you?"

Mr. Armour measured him with a glance of calm surprise, and made no answer.

"What is it that happened," Camperdown went on, "to freeze you, to turn you from a living man to a block of ice—what is it, Stanton?"

Again there was no reply, and his friend continued eagerly:

"You are alive; you eat, drink, sleep, and walk about, yet there is no joy in living. Have you ever heard of the drug 'curare'?"

Armour shook his head.

"It is much in favor with certain members of my fraternity. They use it, as they say, in the interests of science and for the benefit of mankind. Animals to whom it is administered cannot move or cry out, but their nerves are rendered acutely and intensely sensitive. Sometimes," softly, "I fancy that you have been curarized, Stanton."

Armour smiled in rather a ghastly way, and murmured some unintelligible reply.

"By our ancient friendship," said Camperdown in persuasive accents, "tell me. If you are in trouble, let me share it," and uneasily getting up as if he could not remain on his seat, he tramped about the office, not noisily, but very gently, and pushing the chairs aside with his foot. "Stanton," coming and bending over the immovable figure at the table, "I have liked very few men, of them you most of all. When we were lads, I loved you

like a girl. I never told you, but the ancient liking has not entirely passed away. I would help you if I could," and the pent-up emotion of years found expression in a movement that from Brian Camperdown was a tender caress; he stooped down and laid his arm across his friend's shoulder.

Something of Armour's immobility gave way. A slight flush rose to his face, and he said huskily: "I am grateful to you, but there is nothing to tell. My business oppresses me."

"Is that all?" asked Camperdown keenly. "You know it is not. You're eaten up by some worry; everybody knows it."

Armour pushed back his chair, and rose suddenly. "Is it as bad as that?" he said hastily. "Am I remarked upon?"

"We don't see ourselves as others see us. People know that you're not in a normal condition. Of course they discuss you. Who are you that the rest of the world should be gossiped about and you go scot free? Now you'll try to mend, won't you? Throw your burden into the sea. Tell some woman about it, if you won't trust me. If she loves you, you'll be supremely happy; if she doesn't, you'll be supremely miserable, which is the next best thing. Take that little French girl into your heart, Stanton. Next to Stargarde she comes, sweet and true and gentle, and yet full of fire; just the right qualities for you."

Armour looked at him in undisguised dismay. "This is wildness; in the name of mercy stop. Have you been propounding this fine scheme to her?"

"Yes; we discuss it often," said Camperdown, throwing sentiment to the winds and coming back to his accustomed state of irritability; "she's no more in favor of it than you are; says she had as soon wed a mummy as you. Also that you've been detestable to her. Good luck to you in your wooing," and with a look of unqualified disapprobation he strode to the door, slammed it behind him, and hurried through the streets to his own office, where a formidable array of patients restlessly awaited him.

Left alone Armour glanced about him in an impatient way. As if with mischievous finger the words had been traced on the wall, he saw them staring at him whichever way he turned, "Take the little French girl into your heart; take the little French girl into your heart." The very air seemed to be ringing with the foolish speech.

"I wish that Camperdown would let me alone," he muttered irritably. "I shall never marry; if I ever did, she is the last woman in the world that I could or would choose. If he knew everything he would not be so ready with his advice." Then his face softened. "I wonder what she would say if she could know of this conversation. I have never

satisfied myself about that suspicion. I will do so to-day," and with the air of a man well used to mastering his emotions he set his book up before him again, and was soon busy with the solution of some financial problems in which he had been interrupted by the entrance of his friend.

An hour or two later his man came to take him home to lunch. "I shall not go back so early as usual," he said, as he left the sleigh at Pinewood. "Come for me half an hour later."

At the lunch table he did once glance at the place where Vivienne sat quietly eating her baked potatoes and roast beef, and listening with an amused air to Judy's semi-sarcastic remarks.

Mrs. Colonibel, busy with some thoughts of her own, scarcely spoke, and Colonel Armour and Valentine were not present.

"Will you be good enough to come to the library for a few minutes," said Armour, letting his blue eyes rest for an instant on Vivienne as they left the table.

With a murmured reply in the affirmative, she passed by him as he held open the door for her.

"He looks as if he were going to scold her," said Judy turning to her mother. "Do you know whether he thinks that she has been doing anything out of the way?"

"No," said Mrs. Colonibel, coming out of her reverie; "I don't; but I know that he scarcely

approves of anything that she does. He fairly hates her."

"Does he?" chuckled Judy with a sly glance at her mother. "She is not afraid of him at any rate. I admire her, mamma—she's so cool and sweet. Don't you wish you were like her?" and with an impertinent laugh the girl slipped by her.

"I shall not detain you long," Armour was saying to Vivienne in the library. "I only want to give you this," and he took an envelope from his pocket, "and to ask you to pardon me for my thoughtlessness in not handing it to you before."

Vivienne blushed painfully and put back his proffered hand with the question, "Is it money?"

"It is."

"I cannot take it," and she drew a long breath and looked at the door as if she would like to escape from the room.

"Why not?"

"I do not need it."

He surveyed her in quiet disapprobation. "You are vexed with me because I did not give it to you before. But I forgot that you would still have expenses, though under my roof."

"No, I am not vexed; but I still have some money left and I cannot take any more from you."

"Again I ask, why not?"

"Because—because I do not think that it is right for me to do so."

She was very much disturbed though she controlled herself admirably. In an interested fashion he noted the whiteness and evenness of the teeth pressing nervously against the red rebellious lips to keep them from bursting into speech.

"Pardon me," he said; "but I like to get at motives. Do you refuse this money because you dislike me so intensely or——"

"Oh, no, no," she exclaimed, eagerly and protestingly.

"You have avoided me so studiously lately," he went on, "that really I began to fear it was marked by other people."

Always that fear of what others would say. Vivienne smiled demurely. "You mistake me; I never felt so grateful to you—not even when I was a little girl and used to carry about a picture of Napoleon because it resembled you."

"Did you really admire me to that extent?" he said ironically.

"I did."

"And now you dislike me," he said with persistence.

"I have told you that I do not, Mr. Armour."

"You endure me then?"

"No, I do not endure you;" and she laughed outright. "I am, as I said before, intensely grateful to you."

"She has as many moods as there are hours in

the day," he soliloquized in internal discontent. "I wonder how I had better make my next attempt?"

She spoke first. "Mr. Armour, you said that you brought me here to accomplish a certain purpose, and when it was accomplished I might leave. Has the time not yet come?"

"It has," he replied with a return to his usual heavy expression. "You may go at any time. My design has been frustrated, as so many of my designs are."

"I am sorry," she said, "very sorry, for I know that whatever your purpose was, it was a worthy one."

"That is a kind thing for you to say," he responded with unusual animation, "and very fitting. Now you will take this money."

"I cannot, Mr. Armour, and——"

"You will not," he said finishing her sentence for her, "not even to gratify me. Well, though you will soon leave me, as I see you plan to do, I shall still have a care of your movements."

She cast down her eyes. "I will take it," she said hurriedly. "If you would believe me I would tell you that I am more pained to reject kindnesses from you than you are to have them rejected."

"Is that the truth?" he asked calmly.

"It is."

"We shall miss you after you go away," he went on after he had seen the envelope bestowed

in her pocket; "but you, I fancy, will be happy to leave us."

"No, no, not happy; I shall regret it."

"You will miss Judy," he continued; "the other members of the family you are indifferent to."

She lifted her glowing eyes to his face. There was a method in his way of questioning her, and it effected an immediate change in her manner. "If you have no more to say to me," she observed quietly, "I will go away."

"I have nothing more," he said, "except to make the simple observation that you are free to return here at any time."

"I shall not return, Mr. Armour."

The proud sadness of her tone touched him. "You arrogant child," he exclaimed, "how can you tell? What do you know of life?"

"I know what is right for me to do," she said almost inaudibly, "and I must not keep you any longer."

"Stay," he said, "just for one instant. Till you answer my last question. Judy is the one that you most dread the parting from?"

"Yes, Judy—why not Judy?" she said composedly.

It was not Judy. He saw who it was in every curve of her suddenly erect, defiant figure, in every line of her dark annoyed face as she went quickly away.

"I have not been engaged in a very honorable employment," he said when he was left alone. "Baiting an innocent girl has not heretofore been one of my pastimes; but I wanted to find out—and she has teased me and braved me as no other woman has ever done. She loves me." And with a deep flush of gratification he drew on his gloves and left the room. "Hereafter her position in my house will be very different. Perhaps she may not leave us—who knows?" And with a growing conviction in his mind that there were things in the world of more interest than money-making, he drove to his office.

CHAPTER XXV

ZILLA'S ROSEBUD

MISS ZILLA CAMPERDOWN sat on the top step of the second staircase in the house of her adoption, carefully nursing a small parcel done up in white tissue paper, and watching patiently the closed door of a bedroom beyond her.

At last the door opened, and Dr. Camperdown appeared. "How do I look?" he asked, surveying her with a smile so broad and ample that her small form was fairly enveloped by it.

In speechless delight she caught him by the hand, and leading him back into his room, devoured with her eyes every line of his figure.

"How do I look?" he said again, but the child, as if words failed her to describe the perfection of the sight, waved him toward the full length reflection of himself in the pier-glass between his windows.

He gazed complacently at it, and saw a closely cropped, large, but finely shaped sandy head, a trimmed moustache, and a new suit of evening clothes that fitted admirably his strong and power-

fully built figure. "Look like a dandy, Zilla," he muttered. "Body's all right, so it doesn't matter about the ugly face."

"You're a bouncer," she said beatifically. "There'll not be one like you at the toe-skippin'."

"At the what, Zilla?" he asked, twisting his neck in order to get a view of his coat tails.

"The dance," she said hastily. "There'll be women there, I suppose. Don't let them run their eyes after you, Dr. Brian."

"Why not, my child?"

"You might be wantin'—wantin' to fetch one of them here," a spasm of jealousy contracting her brows.

He did not notice it, being still intent upon his coat tails. "Suppose I did bring one, Zilla—what would you do?"

"I'd dash vitriol at her," said the child softly; "then she'd run away."

He turned sharply to her with the sternest expression upon his face that she had ever seen there. Her words had conjured up a vision of his beloved Stargarde hiding her disfigured features from him, and Zilla gloating over her misery. "Your badness is awful," he said backing away from her; "it is the badness of big cities. Thank Heaven, we don't have it here."

His words were as a spark to inflammable mate-

rial. Immediately the child fell into a raging passion. Her joy in his affection for her had been so acute that it had almost amounted to pain, and her fury at his annoyance was so intense that she reveled in it with a mad sense of pleasure. She could not speak for wrath, but she returned his gaze with ten-fold interest, and walking deliberately up to the long mirror, she poised the dainty heel of her slipper and sent it crashing through the glass.

He neither spoke nor stirred, though some of the broken glass came falling about the toes of his patent leather shoes.

She caught her breath, flung at him a whole mouthful of her forbidden "swear words," and sprang at a razor on his dressing table.

At this he started toward her quickly enough, and his hand closed over hers just as she seized the shining steel. She struggled with him like a small wild beast, but her strength was powerless against his. "Drop it! drop it!" he said commandingly; then more kindly, "Put it down, Zilla."

At the change in his tone she looked up at him, and unclasping her fingers from the handle, allowed the dangerous instrument to slip to the floor.

Still holding the little menacing hands, he sat down and took her upon his knee. "Did you wish to kill me with that razor?" he asked.

"No; myself," she said with a sob. "I'm tired o' living."

Tired of living because she fancied that he had ceased to love her. "Zilla," he said, "I have a dev— a demon of a temper."

For answer the child buried her face, as he uneasily reflected, in the glossy bosom of his evening shirt front, and wept as if her heart would break. Yet he did not disturb her, except to pat the back of her head and murmur: "Don't cry, child—you wouldn't really be angry with me if I got married, would you, Zilla?" he asked, after her passion seemed somewhat subdued. "You know that I hope to make Miss Turner my wife some day."

"I would not mind her so much," said the child reluctantly.

"And you would not do anything to hurt her?"

"No." And she raised her tear-stained face to assure him that she spoke truly.

"No one has been putting nonsense in your head about my marrying you, Zilla?" uneasily.

"Marry you!" she said in accents of the utmost scorn. "I'm not fit enough, and I'm only a little girl. 'Twould be too long to wait."

"Far too long," cheerfully. "We'll get you a husband when you're ready for one. Sensible men don't marry babies, or rather young girls."

She understood him and smiled comprehendingly. Then she said humbly: "Don't delay yourself any more—it's time to go. May I say prayers to you first?"

"Yes," he replied, gravely subduing his astonishment at this, the first request of the kind that she had made to him. She knelt down by his knee, and pressing her little hot cheek against his hand, repeated devoutly a series of eminently proper and reverential prayers that Mrs. Trotley had taught her, but which, on account of long words, could not possibly convey to her mind any apprehension of their meaning.

At the last of the many "Amens," she lifted her face and said with unspeakable sadness and humility, "Can I pray an extra?"

"Yes," he returned, biting his lip; "as many as you please."

She immediately poured forth one of the heartfelt, childish supplications which the young when in agony of soul will sometimes utter, and to his mingled shame and confusion it was addressed to himself, rather than to the Supreme Deity, who was but a shadowy and mysterious unreality to her.

"Dear Dr. Brian, cut the devil out of my heart and make me like you," it began, and continued on through his list of virtues—in spite of his recent admission with regard to his temper—and a vehement and longing invocation to be more like him, so that he would not get angry with her.

He did not dare interrupt her, and sat looking at the reflection of his red and confused face in the unbroken part of the mirror opposite.

With a final sob, not dreaming that she had done anything unusual, she quietly put up her cheek for his usual good-night kiss.

"Good-night, dear Zilla," he said, in a rather tremulous voice. "Will you not call me brother in future, rather than doctor?"

The child stared at him incredulously, then flung her arms around his neck in a choking embrace, murmuring in eager delight, "Brother Brian," and rushed from the room.

He rubbed his hand over his eyes. "Must try to teach her a simpler prayer," gruffly. "What's this, something she's dropped?" and he picked up the crushed paper parcel on the floor. It contained a little, headless stalk wrapped in silver foil. The rosebud top had rolled under the table in Zilla's struggle with him. He knew that during the afternoon there had been an excursion made to a distant greenhouse by Mrs. Trotley and Zilla, and had guessed that it was to obtain a *boutonnière* for him.

"Poor child," he muttered; "her rosebud shall go to the dance," and taking it in his well-shaped hands, he, by means of one of his surgeon's needles and a bit of thread, quickly fastened bud and stalk together and placed them in the silk lapel of his coat.

The coat he took off and laid carefully on the bed, and then proceeded to exchange the shirt blistered by Zilla's tears for a fresh one.

A quarter of an hour later he was standing in front of the sleigh waiting for him by the pavement and attentively scrutinizing Zilla's windows. Yes ; the curtains were drawn slightly apart. He threw back his topcoat, pointed to the rosebud, and waving his hand to her entered the sleigh.

"By love I have won her, by love I must keep her," soliloquized Camperdown, as his sleigh traversed the distance between his house and the Arm.

He soon arrived among the vehicles, opened and closed, that were dashing up to Pinewood and depositing their occupants at a side entrance to the house, the large front hall being given up to dancing. By a back stairway he was directed to a dressing room, and joining a stream of people, for Mrs. Colonibel's dance was in reality a ball, proceeded down the wide staircase to the drawing rooms. Mrs. Colonibel, magnificent in pink satin, was receiving her guests inside the back drawing-room door. Colonel Armour, the handsomest man present, in spite of his snowy hair, was with her, as also was Valentine. Stanton was not visible. Beside Mrs. Colonibel stood Vivienne, dressed as usual in white, and receiving the salutations of the many friends of the house, not with the shy, uncertain manner of the *débutante*, but rather with the serene and conventional reserve of a woman of the world.

"Both smiling angelically and neither of them enjoying it," muttered Camperdown, pushing aside

the purple train of a lady's dress with his foot, and stepping behind Mrs. Colonibel. "Solomon in all his glory wasn't a patch on her," surveying the back of her elaborately-trimmed gown. "And ma'm'selle hasn't an ornament. Sensible girl! This is a frightful ordeal for her, this plunge into society in a place that her parents fled from. Far better for Flora to have given her a tea; much more suitable for the coming out of a young girl. That's what we'll give Zilla. But I must perform my *devoir*," and he fell in behind a group of ladies who were coming up to greet their hostess, followed by the gentlemen of their family.

Mrs. Colonibel's fascinating smile was met by an encouraging one on his part, and pressing gently the white-gloved hand of the girl beside her, he passed on to make way for another bevy of ladies. Nodding to men acquaintances, and bowing to every woman whose eye he could not escape, he passed through the room and along the verandas, which had been covered in for the evening.

"As gorgeous as the sun at midsummer, Will Shakespeare would say," he soliloquized. "Light, heat, music, jewels, fine raiment on pretty, painted peacocks, strutting about to show their tails to each other—Flora's idea of heaven. Wonder if Stargarde is about?" With a wholesome fear of imperiling delicate silks and laces, he cautiously re-entered the hall, lifted up his eyes, and saw

Stargarde and Judy bending over the railing of the circular well in the third story of the house. He smiled at them, and in a few minutes they heard his step on the stairway.

"Oh, what a dude!" exclaimed Judy. "Just observe his broadcloth and fine linen, Stargarde, and his *boutonnière*, and perfume too, I believe; that's the little wildcat's doings."

"Hold your tongue, Judy," he said shyly, slipping in to rest his arms on the railing between her and Stargarde.

"Oh, but really, you know, it is too overcoming," said Judy saucily. "And his hair, Stargarde! What have you done with your sandy locks, Brian? Isn't the back of his head nice?" and she ran her fingers lightly over it. "I'm proud of you, my physician," and thrusting her hand through his arm, she looked down on the moving groups of people below. "They're just going to start the dancing; the musicians are in a little room off the library. Stanton had to leave his den for once."

"Where is he?" interrupted Camperdown.

"Dressing; he was detained in town. Doesn't the house look nice, Brian? We've had a florist here all day. I like the palm grove in the back hall best of all. Mamma must be dead tired. She has been at the thing for a week. Stanton for once let her have all the money she wished. All day she has been fussing about the supper, and

watching the thermometers; the house isn't too warm yet, whatever it may be later; and the men were late in coming to take up the hall carpet. There go the lancers. I wish I could dance."

Camperdown was not listening to her, being engaged in carrying on a conversation in a low note with Stargarde, who seemed strangely listless and inattentive.

"Stargarde forgot that it was the night of the ball," said Judy. "She came sauntering out here about six o'clock in that cotton gown, and said that mamma had invited her to something, she didn't know what, but thought it was a dinner. Isn't she queer, Brian?"

"Very," he replied; then to the subject of their remarks. "You look pale; will you sit down?"

She sank obediently into the big chair that he pulled up for her, and he resumed his talk with her.

Judy watched the dancing going on below, and listened to the music as if she were entranced, occasionally hushing Mammy Juniper, who sat on a stool in the corner, rocking herself to and fro and groaning, "O Lord, forgive! Good Lord, pardon!" and similar ejaculations.

"There is Stanton," exclaimed Judy. "I must speak to him," and she limped down to the hall below.

"Not bad looking," she said, critically surveying his calm, well-bred face and heavily built though

finely proportioned figure. "Might even pass for a handsome man. Why is it that men always look so well in evening clothes? Stanton," speaking in a low tone, "when I told Vivienne that your business engagements might keep you in town this evening she looked as if she didn't care at all."

"Perhaps she didn't," he said coolly.

"Bah—you're a man! She did care. What did you say the other day to make her angry?"

"Nothing."

"You did something."

"No, I did not," he said quietly; "but really I must refuse to have Miss Delavigne thrust upon me at every turn."

"Come, look at her and see how lovely she is," and Judy drew him toward the circular opening in the hall. "Aren't her bows delicious? Do you see Valentine watching her? He is happy because she is going to dance with him presently, and I don't believe she wants to, for she is afraid that he is going to get silly over her, just as he has been over other girls."

"Did she tell you this?"

"No, but I know it. What a pity that you have given up dancing, Stanton."

"I must leave you," he said abruptly, and in a few minutes he was moving quietly about among his guests below.

"You may pretend and pretend as much as you

like," said Judy sagely, "but you're a changed man, and everybody notices it; ten times more cheerful, ten times more anxious to be at home, and always with that glitter in your eye. Poor mamma and poor Val!" and chuckling happily she returned to her former place of observation.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MISERY OF THE WORLD

THE house was only pleasantly filled, and there was no crush anywhere. Shaking hands and bowing to many people on his way, Armour passed through the drawing rooms, the library, and the dining room, where on a long table, pots of delicate maiden hair and slender ferns nodded over dishes of dainty china and glassware heaped high with sweetmeats and every dainty viand possible to procure for the elaborate *menu* of a ball supper.

The wide hall where the dancing was going on was, in spite of the season of the year, like a bower in its profusion of growing plants and cut flowers, whose heavy rich odors were as incense to the nostrils of his cousin—a woman of tropical tastes.

Everybody seemed to be stirring about. There were no dull groups along the walls and the ripple of conversation and laughter was a constant one; and no one was in need of special entertainment he was happy to observe. This was the result of Mrs. Colonibel's invariable custom of doubling the number of her young lady guests by members of the opposite sex, the usual proclivity of men to

look on at a dance rather than to engage in it, being well known to her. So Armour was free to enjoy himself in his own way, and feeling no responsibility for the present as a host he joined a knot of people who were watching the dancers from a doorway.

The musicians were playing sweetly and with no lapses into braying discordancy a new waltz, "*Vive la Canada.*" The whole house was flooded with their strains, so strong and soul-stirring, yet so well-modulated that those in the near library were not disturbed by them.

Patriotism it was probably that made the blood stir so strangely in Armour's veins, and his face flush so dark a crimson. His eyes were fixed on Vivienne, who was dancing with the tallest man in the garrison, an officer of the Royal Engineers. Armour noticed that they made frequent pauses, and speculated a little about it, whether it was owing to the awkwardness of her partner, or to her own inclination not to keep on her feet during the entire progress of a round dance. Of the amount of attention that she was attracting she appeared to be quite unconscious, but that she was quite well aware of it, he was fully persuaded.

"Accept my felicitations on the subject of your ward," said a roguish voice in his ear; "your *re*ward perhaps I should call her, considering the satisfactory termination of your cares on her behalf."

Armour put out a hand to one of Valentine's merry friends, who was a frequent visitor at Pinewood. "She's fairer than the moon in all her glory—that's from the Bible isn't it?" pursued the young man; "or perhaps one shouldn't use the word fair in connection with one so dark. Royal touch-me-not style, but fascinating. Hey nonny! wish I had a million and was good enough shot to wing Macartney. *Au revoir*, I'm engaged for the next polka—must look up my partner."

The waltz had ceased and a group of men surrounded the place where Vivienne stood, her white velvet gown gleaming like a snowdrop against the crimson curtain behind her. She seemed to be listening rather than talking and Armour was struck as Camperdown had been by her slight ceremonious air of reserve and by the absence of any girlish eagerness of delight in this her first ball.

He, a man that had fallen into the habit of taking no pleasure in anything, felt like a boy tonight, and suppressing a smile he turned away and sought Mrs. Colonibel to hear any instructions that she might have to give him.

An hour later, while he was having a quiet stroll along the verandas, carefully avoiding the conservatory, where a few stray couples were wandering among the flowers, he came suddenly upon two people who stood in a recess. He turned quickly on his heel, but not before he had noticed the

drooping, regretful attitude of Vivienne's shoulders and the earnest pose of Captain Macartney's figure. Angrily clasping his hands behind his back, and muttering an uncomplimentary remark regarding men who persecute young girls scarcely out of the schoolroom with a declaration of love, he stepped back into the drawing room.

He had scarcely arrived there before a hand was laid on his shoulder. "Go to Miss Delavigne, will you, Armour?" said Captain Macartney, his face a shade paler than usual. "I think she would like some tea, or an ice."

With considerable alacrity Mr. Armour obeyed him. He found Vivienne sitting down, her face extremely flushed.

"It is warm here," he said, cutting a slit in the bunting with his knife. "I do not wonder that you are overcome ; I will bring you some tea."

"I fear that our experiment is not a success," he said a short time later, as he stood watching her drink the tea.

"Do you refer to this ball?" said Vivienne, lifting her eyebrows.

"Yes ; I encouraged Flora in it, for I thought it would be a pleasure to you.

"I can think of nothing but my hackneyed expression of your kindness and my gratitude."

"And that I do not believe; you talk of gratitude, yet your actions belie your words."

"I think that I have outlived balls," she said a little wearily; "and you—you do not care for them."

"No," he returned; "but you are younger than I am."

"Judy and I saw a poor creature to-day when we were with Stargarde. She had been starved to death; it was horrible. If a few of these gowns here to-night were sold they would keep some needy people in food for a year. And the wines that are drunk—they do us no good, and often much harm."

"Would it please you to hear me say that I shall never have wine offered in a mixed assembly again?"

"It would, Mr. Armour."

"Then I say it; and now is that shadow to lift from your face?"

It did not, and Vivienne rose and said in some embarrassment: "Shall we not go to Mrs. Colonibel? I have not seen her for some time."

"Tell me first why you are so ill at ease with me," he said with some doggedness. "You know that I am anxious to atone for my past sins of neglect toward you, yet you give me no chance. You are restless, and I know your one thought is to get away from here."

Her eyes sparkled. "Mr. Armour, it is useless for us to try to agree. We are like fire and steel.

I resolve and resolve that with you, who admire meekness so much in a woman, that I will be a very Griselda ; yet I cannot."

"I seem to rouse all the opposition in you," he said ; "why is it?"

"I would rather not tell you."

"I am tired of this constant, 'I would rather not tell you,'" he uttered in undisguised impatience. "You speak the truth with more offense than most women tell a falsehood."

She played with her fan without speaking to him.

"Stargarde tells me that you wished to have some conversation with me about your parents," he continued ; "yet, in your willfulness, you will not mention them to me."

There was something in this new accusation that touched Vivienne's sense of humor, which was always present with her. He saw her roguish smile and resented it. Scarcely knowing what he did he seized the little white-gloved hand in his : "We are alone for the first time for days. Ask me now what questions you will, and promise me that you will treat me with more friendliness for the rest of your brief stay here."

"Ask you—promise you," she said slowly, and with as much composure as though her hands were free. "Mr. Armour, we cannot be friends because according to you we are not equals."

"Not equals!" he repeated. "What absurdity is this?"

"Some women will lie to their—to their acquaintances," she went on. "I will not; and I say that to a man of your indomitable pride, a child that he has bought and paid for, as it were, and that has grown into a womanhood that may occasionally divert him, is not for an instant to be considered on an equality with him—that is, in his estimation. It is a toy, a puppet, with which he may occasionally amuse himself, then throw it aside."

A variety of expressions chased themselves over his face while she was speaking. When she finished he dropped her hands with a smile: "I am right; I thought that your irrepressible and suspicious pride—with which mine cannot be compared—was at the bottom of this; but I will subdue it. Vivienne——"

"Is not this rather a serious and gladiatorial kind of conversation for a ball," she interrupted, "a place where one should utter only small talk?"

He leaned against the wall, and stroking his mustache in a hasty and disturbed manner muttered: "You are only a girl, yet you have yourself under better control than most women. Would nothing break you down?"

At that moment the conversation of some ladies standing by a raised, curtained window, opening on the veranda, became clearly audible.

"She's not proud, neither is she consaited," they heard in a strident undertone; "I can vouch for that."

"Oh, no, no, my dear Mrs. Macartney, I did not mean to hint at such a thing," interposed the low, cutting voice of a lady well-known to Mr. Armour; "I merely said that a little less haughtiness, a little more humility of deportment, would be befitting to such a very young person who has so broad a bar sinister across her escutcheon."

"Her father was a thief, you know," chimed in a third hard, vulgar little voice; "a low, miserable thief, who stole money just as meanly as a person taking it out of a till. I don't believe in smoothing over big offenses and coming down so hard on little ones. The Armours are very good to want to introduce her into society; but I think a girl like that ought to be left in seclusion. I pity Mrs. Colonibel."

"And it's me own daughter-in-law I'd like to see her," said Mrs. Macartney boisterously.

There was a rustling of silk, two swift "Ohs" of ejaculation, two attempted apologies, and then a subdued snorting which told them that the Irishwoman had left her opponents in possession of the field.

Vivienne sank back on her chair, and Armour turned away to hide the anger of his face. She thought that he was about to interfere, and touched

him on the sleeve with a murmured, "They are your guests."

He shook his head impatiently just as the cutting voice went on, "How exceedingly brusque that Irishwoman is; I cannot bear to have her near me."

"She fancied that she was exploding an important family secret," said the vulgar little voice, "when all the world knows that the French demoiselle has jilted her stepson."

"Indeed?" eagerly. "I have not heard that."

"I am surprised that you have not. She is said to be setting her cap for Mr. Armour. He is richer than Captain Macartney, you know. French girls are artful."

Armour made a step forward, but Vivienne laid a hand on his arm. "There is some one coming," she said, and putting up her fan to partly conceal the terrible pallor of her face, and seeing that he was unable to speak she said in a clear voice, "Did you fancy, Mr. Armour, that this is my first ball? I have been at one other in Orléans *chez les* Dalesworthys. Mrs. Dalesworthy permitted her daughters to put on white gowns and sit behind a screen of flowers for ten minutes only to observe the dancing. I accompanied them, and being anxious to see one of the English princes who was passing through Orléans and had honored the Dalesworthys by being present, I stepped aside from the screen and looked steadfastly at him, being, as I thought,

unperceived. To my wonder I saw Mrs. Dalesworthy approaching, accompanied by an equerry, who informed me that it was the wish of the prince to dance with me. They were both smiling, and as you may imagine I was exceedingly embarrassed. 'Do not speak until you are addressed,' Mrs. Dalesworthy whispered; the prince bowed and offered his arm, murmuring, 'Mademoiselle has not been dancing.' I told him about our being behind the screen, and he seemed greatly amused, and later on requested to have Mrs. Dalesworthy's daughters presented to him. I speak French, as you know, with an English accent, and the prince perceiving it, and finding that I came from Nova Scotia, said a few words about our 'loyal Canada' that you may be sure excessively gratified——"

The passers-by were gone, and her voice broke, "That is what I suspected—dreaded," she said bitterly; "and it is the last humiliation to which I shall be subjected in this unhappy house. Let me go," to Armour, who had put his arm about her, "I do not wish to hear you speak."

"Unhappy child," he said in a low voice, "go then, if you will, and I will come to you as soon as I can."

Vivienne went swiftly upstairs, till she stopped in the prettily furnished hall outside her rooms, and put her hand confusedly to her forehead. Stargarde lay on a broad divan, her face as white as

death, her features contracted in horrible suffering, while Judy, who was the only person with her, hung over the railing intent on the scene below.

"Judy," cried Vivienne, springing to Stargarde's side, "what is this?"

"Oh, what a wretch I am!" exclaimed Judy. "Stargarde, dear Stargarde, won't you speak to me? Come, wake up, or I shall go for Brian."

"What is it? What is wrong with her?" exclaimed Vivienne.

"The usual thing, one of her attacks. Try to rouse her and I'll get Brian," and slipping rapidly downstairs by means of a hand placed on the railing, Judy disappeared.

"Stargarde, my darling," murmured Vivienne, caressing her tortured face, "look at me."

One glance of intense affection she received from Stargarde's deep blue eyes, then the distorted features composed themselves, and the sufferer seemed to sink into a disturbed sleep.

So quickly that Vivienne wondered how he could have gotten there, Camperdown gently thrust her aside, and knelt down by the divan. "Stargarde," he said slightly shaking her, "Stargarde," then bitterly, "Too late; she has gone off."

"Come in here," whispered Judy, drawing Vivienne into her room. "Brian is furious with me; he was afraid that one of these things was coming on, and when Val came for him to go downstairs,

he told me to talk steadily to Stargarde and not let her fall into one of them ; the great thing is to keep her attention."

"What is it? Oh, what is it she has?" and Vivienne clasped her hands in distress.

"I call it 'the misery of the world,'" said Judy, dropping her voice. "A few years ago Stargarde was in New York, visiting some philanthropic people. One evening they were going to make a round of the slums. They put on old clothes and took some policemen, and Stargarde went with them. They got into wicked places where men and women of all nations were ; I don't know what they saw, but there were some dreadful things, and ever since then, when Stargarde gets run down and has nothing to take her mind off it, she'll sit down somewhere, and all the badness that is going on in the world comes up before her like a panorama ; she thinks about the men and women in China and Japan and India, and the poor wretches in London and New York, and it almost makes her crazy. I've seen her throwing herself about just like an actress on a stage, only with poor Stargarde it is real. You know how big she is ; her limbs get convulsed and her face looks like the Laocoön's, and she is so beautiful ; wherever she is and one of these seizures comes on, some one sends for Brian. I've seen him sitting by her with the perspiration dropping off his face. It gives him an awful fright, for

he says she might die in one of them ; he's afraid of her heart. Sometimes blood comes on her face," added Judy in an awestruck whisper.

Vivienne was unable to speak.

"This is not a bad one," said Judy gazing consolingly into her terror-stricken face. "She's in a kind of trance ; I don't think Brian will even have to give her morphine—wait till I see," and she tiptoed to the door. "She's lying quite still," she reported, coming back ; "only moaning occasionally. Vivienne dear, I am going to bed. I don't dare to face Brian again ; he looks so annoyed."

When Mr. Armour mounted to the topmost hall in search of Vivienne, his eye fell on Stargarde lying in unconsciousness on the divan.

"What does this mean?" he asked of Mammy Juniper who sat by her.

"Again the Lord has laid his hand on her," said the old woman solemnly.

Mr. Armour seated himself beside his half-sister, and affectionately drew the rug more closely about her. "Where is Camperdown?" he inquired.

"He's gone to get some supper for Miss Judy," and Mammy looked toward the closed doors of Vivienne's rooms.

She rarely mentioned Vivienne's name, but Mr. Armour knew by her expression that the two girls were together.

"Tear her out of your heart, my son," said

Mammy Juniper in a sudden vehement whisper. "'Tis not the Lord's will."

A terrible gloom and depression overspread the face that he held in his hands as he leaned forward supporting his elbows on his knees.

"Mammy's boy," said the old woman affectionately fondling his head. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out."

"Oh this agony of indecision!" he muttered, looking about him as if for help; "if I only knew what is right——"

"Trust Mammy," said the colored woman persuasively. "She has asked the Lord about it."

"Hush, old woman!" interposed Camperdown coming up the steps behind her bearing a tray aloft. "Give your counsels of vengeance to the winds, and don't stir up this family to any more wickedness. Try to soften their hearts, not harden them. And don't be so sure that you are a messenger of the Lord. I think the devil sometimes tampers with your messages. Stanton, Miss Delavigne is in trouble about Stargarde——"

Armour immediately got up—a resolved look upon his face.

"Here, take this with you," said Dr. Camperdown handing him the tray. "Persuade Vivienne to go downstairs. Mammy Juniper and I will look after Stargarde."

Dr. Camperdown looked severely at Mammy

Juniper after Armour had entered the room. "Don't you see that every drop of blood in his body is crying out for that girl? You might as well try to stop Niagara with one of your fingers as to check him now. Let him alone and all will be well. Your rôle now should be that of peace-maker, and you'll find your hands full with Valentine."

The old woman groaned, shook her head, and with an appearance of the greatest dejection sat swinging herself to and fro.

CHAPTER XXVII

NOT TO BE REPEATED

JUDY had gone to bed and Vivienne was pacing swiftly up and down the room.

Armour would never see her like that again. Her face was flushed and contorted, her head held high, and in all her tempers and mental disturbances she had never flung him so passionate a glance.

"Put it down," she said with a haughty gesture in the direction of the tray.

"Will you eat nothing?" he said. "It is late."

"No, I will not."

He stood quietly watching her.

"Now, proud man, you see me humbled," she exclaimed.

He smiled compassionately. There was certainly not a trace of humility either in her tone or her attitude.

"I don't think that any one ever suffered so much," she said suddenly stopping and clasping her hands. "I—to be so disgraced, so unspeakably debased—oh, it is hard to bear!" and dropping on one of the white couches in the room she burst into passionate crying.

"Poor little girl," said Armour pityingly coming to stand over her.

"Go away," she cried, flinging herself into an upright position. "Why did you come up here? I do not wish to see you. Do you forget my odious designs upon you?"

"Silly gossip," he said, stooping down to stroke her hair.

At his touch she immediately became calm. "Mr. Armour," she said pleadingly, "may I leave here to-morrow?"

"Yes," he said soothingly, "any time you will."

"I will go away with Stargarde," she murmured. "Do not——"

"Do not what, Vivienne?"

"Do not do that," she exclaimed pushing his face away. "How can you touch me—I the daughter of a forger and a thief?"

"Vivienne, do you love me?" he asked gently.

"You insult me deeply—deeply," she said. "Do I love you? Is that a question for a man to ask a woman? I wish that you would leave me. I am not in a condition to talk to you."

"I love you, then—is that better?" he asked indulgently.

"You do not!" she exclaimed wildly. "Do not perjure yourself. If you kiss me again I shall send you from the room."

"Do you love me?" he repeated with persistence.

She sprang away from him and resumed her excited pacing to and fro.

"Do I love you? Yes—no—what does it matter? Suppose I do love a man who prizes me simply as he does his other goods and chattels. I could not be more miserable than I am now. I, who have been so proud of my unblemished name. I wish—I wish that I could die," and she buried her face in her hands.

"I could not lash myself into such a passion as you are in if I lost everything in the world," said Armour.

"Yet you know how to suffer," she interposed impetuously.

"Yes; perhaps if you knew what it costs me to say to you, 'Vivienne, love me and be my wife,' you would not be so hard on me."

"That is it," she replied with a despairing gesture. "You fancy that I admire you. You wish to have me all to yourself; you are a man to be respected by women but not adored, and you are consumed with pride to find one who does adore you; I understand you."

"Partly only," he replied. "Vivienne, come here."

"I will not."

"I foresee a stormy courtship," he said in an undertone. Then anxious to try his power over her he added aloud, "Vivienne, please come here."

"I will not," she said again, but in her goings to and fro her feet seemed to carry her nearer him in spite of herself.

"Come," he said, holding out his hands.

"I will not," she said a third time, but the words were feeble and her outstretched finger tips rested on his hands.

"Sit there now, unreasoning child," he said, drawing her to his knee, "and let us talk this matter over. I have something to tell you that will greatly astonish you."

Her black head drooped to his shoulder. "What is it?" she said feebly.

"I have good reason to believe that your father is not the villain he is supposed to be."

"Is not," she repeated keenly. "Is he not dead?"

"No," quietly; "I do not think so."

She made a bewildered gesture. "I am surprised at nothing now; but why do you say this?"

"I think I would have heard of it if he had died."

The girl was too excited to sit still. She sprang up again and moved restlessly about him. "You understand him," she said; "ah, why have you not talked to me of him before?"

"You have never asked me to do so."

She stopped short, measured him with a quick, comprehensive glance, then resumed her restless

movements. She could not understand him ; it was useless to try to do so. "You liked my father," she said impulsively.

"Yes ; as a lad my father and Étienne Delavigne were my ideals ; your father was very patient and kind to me. He gave me my first instruction in business principles."

"And were they all they ought to be?" asked the girl passionately. "Did he teach you anything dishonorable?"

"No ; he did not."

"Then why did he change?" she asked with one of her eloquent gestures.

"I have told you already that I do not think he did. I do not know, but I have a clue. Some day I may clear him. I have been looking for him for years."

Vivienne gazed at him with a swift-flushing face. "Oh, how grateful I am to you! Where do you think he is?"

"In some of the large cities of the States."

"Why would he not stay in Canada?"

"He would be afraid of meeting some one who knew him."

"You know everything," she said vivaciously, "and I know nothing. Tell me more—more."

"Come and sit beside me then," he said ; "you disturb me with your uneasiness. There, that is better. When your mother died, your father, I

think, resolved to go to some large city, change his name, and work quietly at something till he died. It is very hard to find him among millions of men; but he can be found, and for this purpose I have employed different means."

He paused for a few instants, but Vivienne, who was listening with eager, breathless interest urged him on.

"I employ detectives, advertise——" and he stopped again.

"It must cost a great deal of money," she said. "But why did my father go away? What was it that he did?"

"I will not explain the whole thing to you to-night, you are too much wrought up already. I will simply say that your father was accused of forgery. I believe he found himself in the position of an innocent man who cannot prove that he is not guilty. Being of a timid disposition he ran away."

"And left me."

"And left you," repeated Armour, "to me. He knew that I would take care of you; and in his fatherly affection he would not have your name coupled with his dishonored one. He wishes to be considered dead, and so he is by every one here but myself and one or two others."

"There is an immense load off my mind," said Vivienne, laying a hand on her breast; "but I am not happy yet."

"You will not be happy till you give up your will to mine," said Armour persuasively. "You will marry me?"

"No, no; never," she said, with eyes devouring every line of his face. "I will never marry a man who does not love me as I love him. Yet—yet just for to-night let me imagine that you love me, that you worship me. Let me draw your dear head on my shoulder like this," and suddenly going behind his chair she flung her arms around his neck. "Let me smooth back your hair and tell you that I love you, love you, and yet I can never marry you. For the last time I will kiss you——"

"There never was a first time," murmured Armour, who, nevertheless, was deeply moved by her emotion.

"And I will tell you," she continued, "that you have won what many another man has tried to get and never will get at all, the affection and adoration and sympathy of one foolish woman's heart."

"Why foolish?" he asked, putting up a hand to try to induce her to come from behind him so that he might see her face.

She clung the closer to his neck. "Because," she said, "you have found out that I love you. I should never have allowed you to know it. I have fretted over it and worried and cried till I was ill, but it was of no use."

"It was fate," he said; "you will marry me?"

"Good-night," she murmured; "good-night, good-night. You will never see me like this again."

He felt her warm lips on his ear and cheek, then she was gone. He hastily got up and had one glimpse of her before she disappeared into her room, one hand clasping the train of her white gown, her head carried well in the air.

"Not to be repeated, eh?" he muttered disapprovingly. "Well, we'll see about that," and with eyes bent thoughtfully on the floor he too left the room. In the hall he ran against Camperdown. "How is Stargarde?" he asked.

"All right; how is ma'm'selle?"

"All wrong," and Armour's strong white teeth gleamed for an instant through his heavy mustache. Then he went on his way downstairs, trying to recall to his mind a gipsy prophecy uttered about him when he was a lad, strolling one day about the environs of Halifax with Étienne Delavigne. Ah, this was it; the old woman, thrusting her wedge-shaped face close to his, had muttered it twice: "Self first, wife second, friends a matter of indifference, reputation dearer than life."

"A part of it has come true," said Armour heavily; "I wonder what about the rest?"

CHAPTER XXVIII

MISKEPT ACCOUNTS

VIVIENNE kept her word. When Armour got up the next morning he found that she had already gone to the Pavilion with Stargarde.

With much inward chafing and impatience he listened to Judy, who prattled of her speedy return, and to Mrs. Colonibel who over their late breakfast table talked with languid irritability of several occurrences that had displeased her during the course of the ball.

During the day he called at the Pavilion. Vivienne was out and Stargarde received him.

"Yes, she has told me everything," she said sympathetically; "and Stanton, you must have patience with her. She is in a terribly disturbed state of mind. You are so different from her and she is so young and does not altogether understand that your temperament is a total contrast to hers."

"I have great respect for your judgment," said Armour quietly. "I shall do as you say. Do you think that she will make a suitable wife for me?"

"Yes, oh yes," said Stargarde enthusiastically; "but do not forget that it is not the master of Pine-

wood with whom she has fallen in love—it is the man. Your social position and wealth are small matters to her. It is your undivided attention that she craves."

"She has it," he said heartily, "as far as any woman can."

"She will realize that in time; in the meantime one must give her a chance for reflection."

"There is some difference between our ages," said Armour uneasily. "I wish for her sake that I were a younger man."

Stargarde smiled languidly. "I referred to that and she said she would not care if you were a hundred."

"That sounds like her," he said with satisfaction. "I will go now lest I should meet her."

"Yes, do so," said Stargarde with sweet inhospitality; "and try to keep away from here for a time."

"I will," he said, and after a little further conversation he left her and went back to what he speedily found to be a very lonely house. There was no more cheerful girlish chatter about the halls and in the rooms of his dwelling, for as the days went by, Judy with her usual shrewdness discovered the situation of affairs, and calmly absented herself from home and presented herself at the Pavilion at all manner of unseasonable hours.

"If you have a pretty flower," she said coolly,

"and some one else picks it, you can at least go and sit down beside it and enjoy its perfume, though why this particular hothouse bloom should choose to transplant itself among weeds and stubble is more than I can imagine—making petticoats and aprons for old women too. Stuff and nonsense! She'll soon get over it."

Weeks passed away and Armour in a kind of dull resignation continued his solitary life. Judy was rarely at home and Mrs. Colonibel had grown strangely quiet and haggard. She was also losing her flesh. Armour did not know what was the matter with her, though he knew quite well what ailed his brother, who at home was always dull now, never merry, and who so often returned from the town with a bright red spot in each cheek.

At such times Armour eyed him keenly and suspiciously, for he knew that the red spots betokened a visit to the Pavilion.

"Valentine has developed quite a fondness for Stargarde's society," said Judy one day in a vexed way. "I wish that he would stay at home. No one is happy when he is about, for he teases unmercifully, from the dog up to the human beings."

Camperdown disapproved hugely of the situation of affairs. "It is always the unexpected that occurs," he said one day to Stargarde; "but I didn't expect such a block as this. I'm going to interfere. That girl is worrying you to death."

"No, she is not," said Stargarde; "she really is not, Brian."

"I don't believe you," he said stoutly. "Anyway, she's worrying me, and her mission in the world is to keep that family together. I'm going to talk to her."

"Don't offend her, Brian."

"There now—she is coming between us," he growled. "I'll not have it."

A day or two later came his chance for a conversation with Vivienne. Accompanied by Stargarde's dog she had left the Pavilion immediately after breakfast, and had gone for an early constitutional. She liked to saunter along the streets and look in the shop windows before the rosy-cheeked matrons and maids came trooping from north, south, and west to do their shopping in the business quarter of the town, which lies along the water's edge.

As she stood examining with a critical and approving eye the many soft fur garments hung up in a shop window, Dr. Camperdown came suddenly around the corner of the street, swinging himself carelessly along, his hands in the pockets of his huge raccoon coat, in which he looked like a grizzly bear—amiable or unamiable as his humor happened to be.

Catching sight of Vivienne he moderated his pace, and came to a stop without being perceived by her. As the girl examined a waxen lady who

was enveloped in a complete suit of sealskin, Dr. Camperdown examined her.

"Wax doll better equipped for a walk than girl is," he soliloquized. "Girl's dress might do for Parisian boulevards—too thin for Halifax winter," and he surveyed disapprovingly the quiet elegance of Vivienne's brown cloth costume.

Her attire was certainly better suited for a summer or autumn day than one in February, and she shivered slightly as she stood before him.

"French shoes too," he muttered, looking down at her feet. "No overshoes or rubbers." And as if unwilling to be protected from the cold while she was suffering from it, he angrily swung off his bulky coat, and threw it over his shoulder, saying as he did so, "Little simpleton, her mind is so preoccupied that she doesn't know what she puts on."

Roused by his half-uttered words, the girl turned around. "Good-morning," he said grimly. "Which is your pet form of lung disease? If you just mention it you're likely to have it."

"Ah, Dr. Camperdown, is it you?" she said. "You know that I do not love affliction in any shape. Remember how I grieved over my cold."

"You're on the high road to something worse than a cold now," he said. "Have you no thicker mantle than that; no warm bonnet?"

"I wear neither mantles nor bonnets," she replied, pressing her hands into two tiny pockets at

the sides of her jacket and looking up smilingly at him. "And I was sufficiently warm in this gown in Scotland."

"Old Scotland isn't New Scotland," he grumbled. "They have high winds there, high enough to take the slates off the roofs, but not piercing enough to lay your heart open, as they do here. You didn't look out to see what sort of a day it was before you left the house; come now, did you?"

"Possibly I did not," said Vivienne.

"You didn't," he said; "I know you didn't. Come, let us walk on briskly, lest you take cold. When are you going to cease being obdurate? You needn't stare at me, ma'm'selle, I'm not afraid of your black eyes. Look here, I've something to show you," and he paused on a street corner and drew out several pieces of paper.

The first one was a ridiculous caricature of Stanton Armour standing with his hands wildly clutched in his hair, a frantic expression on his face, which was upturned to the sky.

"He's grappling with the biggest worry of his life here," said her companion, laying his finger on the sketch. "He thought he'd had every trouble in the world, but he hadn't."

Vivienne looked at him inquiringly.

"He hadn't fulfilled his destiny by falling in love. That every man ought to marry he thought was a pernicious doctrine."

"As it is," she remarked with unexpected spirit.

Camperdown scowled at her. "If you don't marry, young lady, twenty years hence you'll be a bad-tempered, dried-up, withered dame that no man will want to look at."

Vivienne shrugged her beautiful shoulders.

"See what a beast I am," he went on; "all because I didn't marry. I'm too selfish to live—come now, don't throw me pretty glances. You can't cajole me. I say a man or a woman who remains unmarried without just cause for doing so, is a detestable egotist."

Vivienne bit her lip and cast a glance in the direction of Mascerene, who was patiently enduring every insult from a passing quarrelsome dog.

"Let him alone, and think about Stanton," said Camperdown impatiently. "He fell in love, as I said. See him here overcome by the discovery: 'Merciful heavens, haven't I suffered enough without having a woman flung into my life, or rather, not a woman, a full-grown creature, but a slender reed of a girl?' I am sure you are sorry for him, Miss Delavigne," turning suddenly and subjecting her composed features to an intense scrutiny.

"I am always sorry when a person suffering happens to be one whom I esteem."

"It is abominable that Stanton should have led so tortured a life," continued the physician; "he has been martyrizing ever since his mother died."

"Unfortunate man!"

"But he's getting over it here," unfolding another bit of paper. "He's thinking that it isn't such a bad thing after all that his adored one is just eighteen years younger than himself."

Vivienne laughed despite herself at the disordered appearance of her always faultlessly attired guardian, who was caricatured as sitting at a table, his hair sticking up all over his head, his fingers tracing with furious haste across the open page of a huge account book the quotation,

> This tough, impracticable heart
> Is governed by a dainty-fingered girl.

"Now you mustn't laugh at this one," he said warningly, as he turned the paper over. "It's too tragic. 'Will she marry me? oh, will she marry me?' See, there is the wharf and the deep black water."

Vivienne did laugh. A few spirited pencil marks showed a man and a maid standing beside each other at the end of a wharf, against which waves were dashing. The girl's face was averted, the man's attitude plainly said, "If you don't do as I wish you to I shall throw myself into a watery grave."

"Oh, put it away," she said merrily, "or I shall bring disgrace upon myself. I did not know that you had so great a talent for caricature."

He put the paper in his pocket and said gloomily: "If I had a sister and Stanton Armour asked her to marry him and she wouldn't, I'd shut her up somewhere."

"What a regrettable thing for Mr. Armour that this obdurate fair one is not related to you."

"Obdurate? She's not obdurate," said the physician, surveying Vivienne half in affection, half in irritation. "I don't understand some men. They beat about the bush and examine their motives, and shilly-shally till it makes one wild to see them. Why don't they say to the women they love, 'I'm going mad for love of you; you must marry me. I'll wait and watch, but I must have you. You shall not marry another man'?"

"Mr. Armour is of a different nature," said Vivienne.

"No, he isn't," with a suppressed laugh; "only it takes him longer to wake up. I don't know what was the matter with him, unless he was thinking of the girl rather than of himself. Perhaps he thought that she didn't care for him. Now he's got a hint to the contrary, and all the power on earth won't keep him from urging his suit. I suppose you didn't know that he nearly went to the West Indies in one of his ships two weeks ago?"

"No; I did not."

"He has some trouble that I don't understand," said Camperdown. "Anyway, I told him that if he

didn't do something to stop his fretting, he'd be in an insane asylum within a year."

"But he did not go away."

"No; something happened to prevent. He ought to go somewhere though. Miss Delavigne, have you not been hasty?"

"I think, Dr. Camperdown, that without being a brother, you exercise the privileges of one," she said gravely.

"Then adopt me," he said; "let me be your brother. If Heaven had vouchsafed me a sister, I should have prayed that she might be like you."

Her eyes grew moist as she looked into his wistful face. She just touched the large hand extended to her, but her fingers were immediately seized in a warm grasp.

"You don't understand," she said, with a catch in her voice. "He really does not care. He does not come to see me."

"Overtures will be made you in the course of time; will you receive them?"

"Yes," she replied breathlessly, then she fairly ran away from him.

The overtures came sooner than she had expected. That afternoon as she sat alone over the fire an urgent message came over the telephone from Judy.

"Vivienne, is that you?" called the lame girl in an anxious voice.

"Yes; it is I."

"Can you come quickly to Pinewood? No one is ill, but you must come. I cannot explain."

Vivienne hurried to the veranda, where she found MacDaly lounging about. "Will you get me a carriage as quickly as possible?" she asked.

"Yes, revered and honored lady of transcendent charms," he replied; then with considerable alacrity he gave direction to his long legs to carry him as speedily as possible to the nearest cabstand.

Vivienne, with a wildly-beating heart and eyes that went roving affectionately over every object on the well-known road to Pinewood, soon found herself before the hall door and in Judy's embrace.

"Come in, come in," was her hurried greeting. "Mamma asked me to send for you. I don't know what is going to happen, but I think there is something wrong with her accounts. Stanton asked her to bring her housekeeping books to him this afternoon. He examines them about once a year. I fancy that she has been misappropriating."

Vivienne shrank from her. "Judy, what are you saying?"

"The truth, I fear," and Judy made a detestable face. "Do you think mamma would hesitate to steal if she thought she wouldn't be found out? No, indeed; but Stanton will be too sharp for her, and he is so particular that if he finds her out he will be in a terrible rage."

"This is a shocking thing that you are saying; surely you have made a mistake."

"No, I have not," said Judy stubbornly. "I wish I had. Where did mamma get that last set of jewelry? where those English dresses? She must have squeezed the money out of her housekeeping."

"Judy, I feel very much in the way; you should not have brought me here."

"Are you not willing to do this much for me?" said the girl. "Do you want to see my mother turned out of doors?"

"No," said Vivienne, throwing her arm around her neck; "but what can I do, dear?"

"You can do more with Stanton than any one. He has been hateful lately. A bear with two sore paws would be an angel compared with him. I cannot hear mamma saying a word. She must be terribly disturbed. She always begins to shriek over a slight thing. Will you not go in?"

"Judy, I cannot," and Vivienne drew away from her.

"Stanton is raising his voice; he must be furious," said Judy, placing an ear at the door. "What is he saying? 'Leave here at once.' Oh, Vivienne, go in, go in! Tell him that she cannot. What will people say?"

Vivienne was standing at a little distance from her, and she did not move till Judy threw herself

upon her with a frantic, "Vivienne, she is my mother; I do not love her, yet—yet——"

"Do not cry, darling," said Vivienne, kissing her impulsively. "I will do as you wish," and she knocked at the door.

"They do not hear you," said Judy, turning the handle; "go in and do what you can," and she ushered her champion into the room.

A very quiet and unobtrusive champion she had introduced, who stopped short in acute distress. Armour was standing with his back to the door, yet Vivienne could see that he was in one of the terrible rages of which Judy had told her. Mrs. Colonibel sat at a table, staring with wide-open, glassy eyes at some account books before her.

"Speak for me, Miss Delavigne," she said with a gasp of relief. "I have offended Stanton mortally. You can feel for me on account of your father."

Armour turned on his heel and his face underwent an immediate change; Vivienne stretched out her hand to him. Though he were a prey to ten-fold more evil passions than the ones which possessed him, he yet was the man that she loved. He took her hand silently, then he said sternly to his cousin: "Go; you make me forget you are a woman. Let me be rid of you to-night. I hope that I shall never see your face again."

Mrs. Colonibel burst into a violent fit of weep-

ing. "Oh, Stanton, give me a little chance," she sobbed; "a month longer, even a week, to prepare for this. You will ruin my prospects."

"You have heard what I said," he replied, walking away from her to a window. "You can't change my resolve."

"Intercede for me," whispered Mrs. Colonibel as she passed Vivienne; "he will listen to you."

Armour stood with his hands behind his back till the door closed. Then he looked around to see if he were alone.

Vivienne still remained—sorrowful, grieving, and saying not a word.

"How did you come here?" he asked.

"Judy sent for me."

"Ah," he replied significantly.

He resumed his scrutiny of the outdoor world and for a long time made no further remark. Vivienne slipped to a corner of a sofa. After a time he began to pace up and down the room talking bitterly, half to himself, half to her.

"Always the same—trust and deceit, honor and lies. They are all in league against me. They deceive me in one direction and I am on my guard there; then there is a change of position and I am attacked in some other place. Vivienne," abruptly, "I would rather see you dead than deceitful."

He had paused close to her, and as he spoke he gazed into her face with piercing scrutiny.

"You do not flinch," he said; "yet you too may be acting a part. Have you lured me on with shy defiance and pretty girlish conceits in order that you may count another victim?"

"I am profoundly sorry for you," said the girl. "Your faith in human nature has received another shock."

"Which does not add to my charms," he said harshly, unhappily, and with some resentfulness. "You need not shrink from me. I'm not going to sit down beside you."

"Which does add to your charms for me," said the girl with great firmness; "and I am not shrinking from you but making a place for you."

His expression brightened, and he dropped on the sofa beside her and laid his head on her shoulder like a tired child, murmuring: "You have come back to me, dear little girl. Smooth those ugly wrinkles from my face. I have longed to feel your hands wandering over my head again."

"I first loved you because you were unhappy," said Vivienne composedly; "but it breaks my heart to see you like this."

"This is a moment of weakness," he said languidly, "of mental relaxation. This stirring of one's emotions is a detestable thing; and I have it all the time, I who was born for a tranquil life."

"Tell me all your troubles," whispered Vivienne in his ear, "everything, everything."

"No," he said unexpectedly. "No," and suddenly straightening himself he took her in his arms. He was a strong man again, and Vivienne fluttered a little in his grasp, blushing in deep perplexity and wonder.

"Do you wish to go away?" he asked.

"No," she said; "not if you will do as I wish."

"And you wish to be mother confessor?"

"Yes; give me the history of your life, your inner life."

"Well—I love you," he said.

With an intense passionate gesture the girl held her head well back, her burning dark eyes staring hard into his flashing blue ones. Yes, there was a strength and fervor of devotion there that she could not doubt. She dropped the arms that she had outstretched to keep him from her with an unutterably satisfied "Oh!" of surprise.

"A curious exclamation that," he said teasingly; "have you nothing more to say to me?"

She would not speak for a long time, but remained with her face hidden in his shoulder. Finally she said: "When did you find this out?"

"It has been true all along," he said; "only you would not believe me."

"Who is deceitful now?" she cried.

"I am not; I really have loved you for weeks, only I have been a stupid, blundering fool about expressing myself. When will you marry me?"

"I do not know. You will not send Mrs. Colonibel away, Stanton?"

"Yes I will; do not speak of her," and his face darkened.

"Let her remain for a time."

"Not a day."

"Not to please me?"

"Let me tell you what she has done," and somewhat grimly he related the history of his cousin's thefts.

"Why does not your face change?" he asked when he finished his story; "why do you not look scornful and shrink from me?"

"Why should I, Stanton?"

"I come of the same stock. Flora was an Armour before she married old Julius Colonibel for his money. This family is like a blasted tree, whose branches drop off one by one."

"But the trunk remains; it will be sound till it falls," said Vivienne, trying to enclose his unhappy figure in her arms; "and I know an ivy that will cling to it."

"God bless the ivy, the confiding ivy," he muttered with a clearing of face.

"And you will forgive Flora, Stanton?"

"Forgive, forgive," he repeated; "what an easy word to say and what a hard thing to do. Shall one word be the end of her sin against me for months?"

"You have nothing to do with her punishment," said Vivienne softly. "God takes care of us when we sin. Flora has already suffered. Put that thought aside and go to make your toilet for dinner."

"I do not wish any dinner," he said.

Vivienne looked at him mournfully. "And I am so hungry!"

He smiled. "Well, my child, I hope for your sake that the bill of fare is all you can desire."

"It will not be if you are not there. The daintiest dishes will turn to dust and ashes in my mouth."

"How she loves me—this little girl," he said, holding her at arms' length and fondly inspecting her.

"It grieves me when you brood over troubles," she continued, with a contraction of her dark brows. "You are a true Anglo-Saxon. Try to be light-hearted."

"I place myself at your disposal," he said. "Tell me what to do."

"Ah, you have spoken; now do not retract. Go immediately to unhappy Flora. Try to make her comprehend that you forgive her, that she shall never be forced to leave Pinewood, that I and you also wish her to stay."

"No, no," he interrupted, "I cannot agree to that."

"Do you think I could be contented in a paradise even with you from which unhappy souls have been expelled?" she exclaimed.

"I think that I could make you so."

"You could not, for you would not be happy yourself. You too have a conscience, and you know that if we are selfish we shall be miserable. Also there may be a change in Flora, and though I shall be fond of assuring you that our interests are identical, may I not ask whether you will not promise me the supreme control of our *ménage?*'

"I will."

"And who always keeps his promise? You are silent, therefore I proceed. After visiting Flora, go to your room and practise a contented smile before your glass, then descend to the dining room fully prepared to welcome our adored Stargarde, who will probably come out to dinner. Will you do this?"

He hesitated.

"Then all is at an end between us," she said tragically. "I can have nothing more to do with a man as doleful as yourself."

"You dear little witch," and he put out a hand to detain her, but her laughing face looked at him from a door across the hall, and he was obliged to walk across to her.

"This thing has cut me deeply," he said, "more deeply than you can understand. If you will con-

sent to remain here till we are married, Flora may also stay till then—that is if she will keep out of my sight for a day or two."

"Would you make a business transaction of it?"

"I lay no claim to perfection."

"Very well," said Vivienne with a wise shake of her head, and she went upstairs to Judy who was hanging over the railing above.

"It is shocking about Flora," she murmured; "but if I allow him to meditate so much on these family problems he will become distracted."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE MICMAC KEEPS HIS CHARGE

FEBRUARY passed away, and March came—"March that blusters and March that blows, March the pathway that leads to the rose"—the month hailed with delight because it breaks the back of the Nova Scotian winter.

In a lamblike and gentle manner it succeeded snowy February, with a brilliant sun, not too high winds, and thawing, melting rivulets in every direction running from rapidly-melting snow-banks. But after the first of the month there was a change. Jack Frost again clouded the windows, an icy hand was laid on the rivulets, the snow-banks no longer decreased in size, and there were two whole weeks of outdoor skating.

Lent had begun and the winter gayeties had ceased. Mrs. Colonibel, missing the stimulus of a constant round of excitement and forced to think constantly of her changed position in the household, was a different woman.

Nominally she still retained her old place; in reality it was the young French girl who was the mistress, who was consulted on all possible occa-

sions while she was ignored. She accepted the situation with rather more grace than might have been expected and only on rare occasions offered a protest. A kind of reluctant admiration for Vivienne had sprung up in her breast. She knew that the girl on one pretext and another was delaying her marriage because she feared that Armour, though willing to indulge her on every other point would probably be firm with regard to this one; his cousin would not be allowed to remain in his house nor to retain the slightest authority in household affairs—she must make room for the young wife.

At the close of one sunny Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Colonibel approaching her glass with a kind of horror at her altered appearance, carefully applied some rouge to her cheeks and then went drearily downstairs.

It was nearly dinner time, but Valentine was the only person in the drawing room. Judy and Vivienne were with Stargarde, with whom they spent the greater part of their time. Stanton had not yet come and Colonel Armour was dining in town.

Valentine stood by the window, his hands behind his back, his eyes bent on the long, glassy expanse of the Arm, where a number of boys were skimming to and fro like swallows. He looked around as Mrs. Colonibel entered the room. His

face too, was restless and unhappy, and to conceal it he turned his back on her and moved toward the open conservatory door.

She took his place at the window. The huge, yellow ball of the sun was just dropping behind the fir-topped hills on the other side of the Arm. The spiked tree points stood out against the clear blue sky like the jagged edges of some rude fortifications. Below the forest, where stood fishermen's houses and the summer cottages of Halifax citizens among gray fields, a shadow had fallen, but a golden glow yet lingered on the frozen Arm and along the eastern shore where Pinewood was situated.

Mrs. Colonibel's glance wandered aimlessly to and fro, from a few belated crows that had been to the seashore to look for fish, and with hoarse and contented croaks were sailing to their haunts in the old pine trees at the head of the Arm, to the small boys who seemed loth to leave the ice.

"Those lads have it all to themselves," she said spiritlessly.

"Yes," muttered Valentine; "magnificent ice too."

"Val," suddenly, "why couldn't we have a skating party this evening? I know Miss Delavigne would like it, for she won't go to the rink now."

His eyes glittered, but he said nothing.

"There's been steady frost for a week," she went on earnestly; "it's perfectly safe, and the evening

bids fair to be lovely. What do you say? is there a moon?"

"Yes."

"We'll have a bonfire anyway, and tea at the cottage."

"All right," he said.

"Then come to the telephone with me, and let us decide whom to ask. There's nothing going on, and everybody will come."

Mrs. Colonibel felt better. With considerable energy, after a sufficient number of guests had been invited, she, seconded by Valentine, who began to show some interest in the matter, made arrangements for the evening and then went to the dining room.

An unusual air of animation pervaded the table when Armour came in and found Valentine carving in his stead. He glanced about inquiringly while his brother was surrendering his seat.

"We're going to have a small skating party, Stanton," said Judy. "There's no harm in that, if it is Lent, and everybody is tired of the rink. Will you come?"

"I am sorry to say that I have to return to the office."

Vivienne's face clouded slightly, and his glance rested on her in almost idolatrous affection. "You wish to go, do you not?" he said.

"What a question!" snapped Judy. "You

know she's an enthusiastic skater, and you sha'n't deprive her of it, Stanton. Besides, I'm going to venture on the ice this evening. You know I don't skate in the rink."

"Very well," he said; "Vivienne shall do as she chooses. Perhaps I may get out before your party breaks up. What have you been doing this afternoon, Judy?"

Between the intervals of satisfying the demands of a wonderfully good appetite, Judy gave him a humorous description of some hours spent at the Pavilion, and set everybody laughing at her account of the mingled ingenuousness and shrewdness with which Stargarde dealt with some of her troublesome *protégés*.

Apparently they were a very happy family. Vivienne and Judy were as lighthearted as two children; Armour's coldness and sternness were almost lost in the grave happiness that had seemed to envelope him since his engagement to Vivienne; Mrs. Colonibel's private worries had for some time kept her from afflicting the household with outbursts of impatience; and Valentine for once lost his sullen and reserved demeanor, and the two angry red spots that had so frequently showed themselves in his cheeks died away.

The dinner was somewhat hurried, and at its close the different members of the family scattered in various directions, all with some commission from

Mrs. Colonibel to execute, except Armour, who went immediately to the library after requesting that the Micmac should be sent up to him.

With a noiseless, catlike tread the Indian, a few minutes later, knocked at the library door and after waiting for Mr. Armour's "Come in," advanced slowly into the room, and stared at his master with lazy, observant eyes, his hands hanging straight by his sides.

"You are prompt, Joe," said the gentleman; "you were not off to your wigwam?"

A fiction politely kept up in the family for Joe's gratification was that he every evening crossed the Arm to his solitary camp in the woods, when as a matter of fact he, on cold nights, occupied a snug and warm retreat at the cottage.

"Too early," said he sententiously. "Go later, when moon shinum."

"Mrs. Colonibel is going to have a skating party to-night," said Mr. Armour.

"Yes; me busy," said Joe.

"Are you; I am glad to hear it. I sent for you to ask that you give some assistance in preparing for it."

"Mr. Valentine askum," said Joe. Then he added with a gurgle in his throat resembling a laugh, "He likeum bear in trap now."

Armour's face darkened, then as quickly lightened again at a deliberate proceeding on the part

of the Indian, whose eyes during a slow voyage of discovery about the room revealed to him a photograph of Vivienne on the mantelpiece at the sight of which he crossed himself devoutly.

"Why do you do that, Joe?"

"She likum Wirgin Mary."

"I'm afraid your ideas of religion are rather mixed, Joe."

"She likum Wirgin," repeated the man.

"Do you really think so?" said Armour softly.

"Um," and the Indian grunted half-contemptuously. "Me likum Wirgin girl when you cold like fish. Joe watch her always. She say, 'Joe, in wigwam you freezum; you go some warm place; me pay.' Joe say no, then Wirgin girl makeum this," and throwing open his coat he displayed a bright vest of fine red cloth embroidered with gold, by the presentation of which Vivienne had won his heart forever, for she had gratified his savage fondness for gay colors, a fondness strictly repressed in his dependence on Colonel Armour for cast-off garments of sober, gentlemanly hues.

Armour's face flushed in deep gratification. He was also much interested in the curious fact that the Indian should display ten times more attachment to Vivienne, whom he had only known for a few months, than he ever had to Stargarde, who had been a devoted friend to him for years. Probably Stargarde, with her leveling doctrine of the

brotherhood of all men, did not appeal to his semi-civilized nature as did Vivienne, with her aristocratic habit of treating dependents kindly, and yet rather as if they belonged to a different order of beings from herself.

"You marryum soon?" said Joe, who, in spite of his press of work, was in an unusually loquacious mood.

"Not for a good while, Joe—four whole months."

A sound of guttural disapproval issued from Joe's throat. Then with a sardonic smile he inwardly reflected: "Cunnel wishum Miss Debbiline marry Mr. Val; Joe's heart say, 'No, Cunnel, Miss Debbiline likeum Mr. Stanton.' Joe guessum Mr. Stanton know."

Mr. Stanton did know. There was a look of white, suppressed rage on his face. Strange to say his thoughts had gone in the same direction as Joe's. He was at that moment reflecting for the thousandth time on the bitterness of the unnatural struggle that he had carried on with an unnatural parent for so many years.

"You not feelum bad," said Joe consolingly, as he observed his emotion. "Me.watchum like dog, always."

Armour instantly recovered himself and turned his despairing eyes from the photograph. "That is all, Joe. You may go now."

The Micmac buttoned his coat over the sacred

scarlet vest. "You never loseum, Mr. Stanton. Me watchum. Mr. Val get out of trap—sore paw heal—he snarl, but not much hurt. Ging," and with this invariable parting salutation, he glided from the room.

With a face as devoid of expression as one of the blocks of wood that he was cutting, Joe laid the foundation of a substantial bonfire on a gravel walk close to the frozen shore of the Arm. A number of garden seats he placed near by, and a few small tables. Then walking along the path, he surveyed the jagged cakes of ice shouldering each other up the bank, and selecting the clearest place, chopped a cutting to lay a plank walk to the smooth ice. This done, he examined the sky where a pale and sickly moon was reluctantly climbing above the trees, a hazy cloud hanging on her skirt.

"No wind—crows much chatter this sundown—big snow 'fore morning," muttered Joe; then he sauntered to the cottage to see that the fires were burning brightly and watched the house-servants who were bringing down china and eatables in covered baskets, and large kettles for heating tea, coffee, and soup.

An hour later the snapping, crackling bonfire sent up a cheerful blaze that brightly illumined the frozen declivity, the walls of the little cottage against the evergreens, and the sheet of bluish-

white ice spreading itself out under the pale rays of the moon. Groups of guests came hurrying down in detachments from the house, laughing and exclaiming at the pleasures of an impromptu skating party, and Joe, standing a little aside, watched them. To his Indian mind, the obsequious manner in which the gentlemen of a party always served and ministered in every possible way to their "squaws," was the most remarkable thing in the social intercourse of white people.

"Makeum no good," he soliloquized, surveying a little lady's delicate foot extended for a skate that Valentine was putting on with an *empressement* as great as if kneeling at her feet were the most supreme happiness that could be bestowed upon him.

Though talking and laughing with the little lady, Valentine kept one eye on the path to the house, and Joe knew that he was watching for Vivienne, who had not yet appeared. Presently she came lightly over the gravel, Judy hanging on her arm.

Valentine had just finished his task and springing up was about to offer his services to Vivienne, when Joe strolled out from the trees.

"Me puttum skates on, Miss Debbiline?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes, Joe," and she seated herself a little apart from the others.

"Here, Val," said Judy mischievously, taking the

seat that had just been vacated. "I'm very fidgety about my boots. If you don't get them on right you'll have to unlace them again."

Joe had never done such a thing before as to put on a lady's boots, and it was a great honor for Vivienne that he should offer to do so. If it had been the simple clasping of a pair of spring skates his task would have been more simple, but Vivienne, in common with many Canadian skaters, wore steel blades that were screwed to the soles of a pair of boots.

Joe took off the little slippers in which she had run down from the house, carefully fitted her boots, right and left, then proceeded to grapple with the long laces which he reflected would be sufficient to fasten on two pairs of moccasins. Carefully he drew the black strings in and out till his task was done, when he drew his hand over the smooth firm leather that fitted over the ankles so neatly, and had some kind of a conceit pass through his mind similar to that of the classic Mercury with winged heels.

Vivienne rose, thanked him, and walked over the planks down to the edge of the ice where Judy was waiting for her.

"Joe, Joe," exclaimed the latter looking back at him, "bring some chairs out on the ice and get that one with runners. Mrs. Macartney will be here later on."

"*La voilà*," said Vivienne, as a loud, jovial voice was heard in the distance, and presently Captain Macartney and Patrick were lifting their caps to the two girls, while Mrs. Macartney roamed to and fro, looking apprehensively at the heaped-up ice floes, and the plank walk to which she was by no means inclined to trust herself.

"It's like the man that ran away with Lord Ullin's daughter," she vociferated in her jolly way. "He couldn't get across—that is, the father couldn't —and he said, 'My daughter, oh, my daughter.'"

Vivienne came swiftly back, and seized both her hands. "Dear Mrs. Macartney, I am so glad to see you."

"And sorry that we came," said Patrick, pretending to cry. "Come away, Geoffrey."

"Naughty boy," and Vivienne shook her head at him, then with Captain Macartney and Judy busied herself in getting Mrs. Macartney out on the ice and into the chair with runners, on which the lady sat for the remainder of the evening, being pushed hither and thither by any man who felt the spirit moving him to do so.

Camperdown arriving half an hour later, stood high up on the bank struck by the strange beauty of the scene. The moon, as if still uncertain of herself, shone with rays more pale and more tremulous, and shed a weird and peculiar light over the dark hills and the white breast of the Arm. There

was a strange hush in the air, and not a breath of wind, and it was hardly freezing. Assuredly a storm was brewing and a thaw coming on.

Immediately below him the bonfires and torches stuck in the ground threw a broad, bold glare of light for some distance out on the ice, and the skaters for the most part were keeping pretty well in the bright space, and away from the semi-darkness of the regions beyond, where a few adventurous boys were madly careering. Their frolicsome shouts and exclamations Camperdown could hear but confusedly in the velvety softness of the air, but beneath him he could distinctly distinguish Patrick Macartney's voice.

"Dr. Camperdown, my mother begs to inquire whether she has your gracious permission to partake of a cup of tea."

"Three-quarters only, a whole cup later on," said Camperdown, who, by means of rigid dieting had so reduced the weight of his patient that she had made a vow never to leave Nova Scotia.

"Camperdown, Camperdown," called some one who espied him on the bank, "make haste; we want one for a set of sixteen lancers."

Thus appealed to, he quickly put on his skates, passing on his way to the place where he was in demand, a little group consisting of Judy, Patrick, and Vivienne, who was giving them instructions in the art of skating.

Valentine skated swiftly up to them as he went by. "You are victimizing yourself," he heard him say in a low voice to Vivienne. "Come with me for a spin."

He saw the girl hesitate, but Valentine laughed, peremptorily seized her hand, and away they went toward the mouth of the Arm like two birds that had taken wing.

Vivienne was not pleased. Valentine's action had been abrupt, almost rude, and it annoyed her to be treated with so much unceremoniousness. And yet in her heart there was such a profound and sorrowful compassion for the young man whose unhappy state of mind she realized only too fully, that it kept her from any outward display of resentment.

He was laughing and talking somewhat wildly, and there was a reckless gleam in his eye that made her avoid meeting his glance.

They were both excellent skaters, swift and graceful of foot; and for a few minutes Vivienne had a kind of painful enjoyment in the rapid rushing through the air, but at last she said gently: "Had we not better return?"

"Not yet!" he exclaimed, and his grasp of her fingers tightened.

The girl had one of her quick, unerring intuitions. Valentine had fallen into one of his rash humors, in which he was a slave to the impulse of

the moment. Without sufficient hardihood to plan a deliberate misdeed, scarcely a day passed without his falling heedlessly into one.

The eastern bank of the Arm that they were close to seemed to be rushing by them like the dim and hazy outline of some huge beast tearing along in the opposite direction from that in which they were going. The light and noise of the skating party were far behind them. Away in front was the smooth, black ice, dark and treacherous, that they would soon be on. Then beyond the ice, where it grew thinner and thinner, was the icy, open water.

"Valentine," she said calmly, "what are you doing?" and she again strove to draw her hand from his.

He laughed wildly, made a sudden turn, and was skating backward, his desperate eyes looking into hers, his left hand outstretched to seize her right. He would make sure of her other hand in order that she might not escape him.

She saw the mocking, reckless devil looking out of his eyes, and the hot, French blood rose in her veins. She held back her hand from him; dangling from it was a stout leather strap by which she had been pulling Judy about. At the end of the strap was a buckle.

"Coward!" she exclaimed in bitter contempt, and swinging the strap in her hand, she struck him on the forehead.

The sudden shock, the sting of the metal, and the blood that trickled down his face confused him. He threw both hands to his head, staggered, and fell backward. Vivienne stood looking at him, and as he groped blindly for his pocket, skated to him and dropped a handkerchief between his fingers.

With a low cry of rage like that of a wounded beast, he sprang to his feet, stretched out his hands, felt himself pulled from behind, and again fell to the ice.

He was a sorry spectacle as he lay raving and swearing there. "You better go, Miss Debbiline," said Joe, who in a pair of long racing skates had appeared just as he was needed. "I takeum care him."

Vivienne turned and went slowly up the Arm. "Where is my strap?" asked Judy when she rejoined her. "I want you to drag me about a little more, if you are not tired."

"I threw it away," said Vivienne. "Here is my necktie," and she drew a voluminous tie from the bosom of her short skating jacket.

"Why, it is dripping wet," exclaimed Judy.

"I am very warm," said Vivienne with a faint smile. "Give it to me, Judy."

"But, Vivienne, it looks as if you had been in the water."

"I assure you I have not. Give me the tie. Now take my hand."

At ten o'clock, when servants were running to and fro from the cottage to the ice, and the skating party was refreshing itself with various meats and drinks, an acquaintance of Mrs. Colonibel suddenly lifted up her voice :

"There comes Mr. Armour, running down the bank like a boy."

He was in great good humor, and saluted her with the utmost cheerfulness. "Yes, Mrs. Fairlee, I did think I was going to miss this; and I haven't been on the ice this winter. Will you have a turn with me?" and standing beside her, first on one leg and then on the other, he fastened his skates to the heavy soles of his boots with two decisive clicks.

"No, I won't skate with you," she said, rolling her eyes at him over her coffee cup. "I don't believe there's a woman here cruel enough to do such a thing—is there, ladies?" and she took in the party with a mischievous, inclusive glance.

"No, no—no cruelty here—don't know what it is, but we won't persecute Mr. Armour," and similar laughing ejaculations were heard.

"I want to see Major Heathcote on a matter of the last importance," she continued loudly; "does any one know where he is, and will you, Mr. Armour, find him for me?"

"I will," he replied, simultaneously with a voice announcing that Major Heathcote was explaining something to Miss Delavigne.

"Ocular demonstration, probably," said Mrs. Fairlee. "Off you go to find them, Mr. Armour; here's a currant bun for refreshment," slipping it from her saucer to his pocket.

He smiled at her—she never could tease him—and turning his face toward the north he skated from her with long, powerful strides. Not twenty paces distant he met the two people whom he was in search of.

"No, we have not been to Melville Island," said Major Heathcote, stopping short. "Would you have cared to go, Miss Delavigne?"

"I did not think of it, thank you."

"Perhaps you would like to skate in that direction with Mr. Armour?"

Miss Delavigne did care to do so, after a deliberate survey of Mr. Armour's face, and Major Heathcote went smilingly in search of his wife and refreshments.

Through the faltering moonlight they skated, rapidly skirting the dusky shore where one comfortable residence succeeded another; all standing in grounds trending down to the inlet of the sea.

Keeping close to the trees, they struck across to the opposite side, where on tiny Melville Island is perched the house of the keeper of the prison, dominating the prison itself, a long, low red building situated close to the Arm on the shores of a tiny cove.

This cove Armour skated slowly around, holding Vivienne by the hand and confiding to her reminiscences of boyish days hoarded for many years in his own breast. She listened with great attentiveness, understanding well, in the quiet intensity of her love for him, what a relief it was for his overburdened mind to have at last found one being in the world to whom its secrets could be partly confided. That she did not have his whole confidence she knew well, but she was willing to bide her time.

At last he stopped, and looked searchingly at her. "*Tu as les yeux fatigués*," he murmured in the French that it was such a pleasure to her to hear him speak, and he guided her to a fallen tree that lay near the old prison. They sat down on it and he again scanned her face.

"You are quiet and pale," he said uneasily. "Is there anything the matter with you?"

"Not now," she said softly. "What is this round thing that you have in your pocket? Ah, a bun," and taking it out she began to eat it, offering him an occasional currant.

Armour sat beside her laughing and talking happily, and at intervals lapsing into the serious by a discussion of the history of the prison, among whose captives had been some American officers taken in the war of 1812.

Vivienne listened silently but appreciatively to

him till a low sob of wind and a few flying snow-flakes warned her that they must hasten home.

Armour's high spirits suddenly left him. "Vivienne, I hate to return to that house," he said. "I wish I could take you and turn my back on it forever. Would you be willing to leave Nova Scotia? Would you like to live in France?" and he put his arm around her as he skated slowly beside her.

"For what reason, Stanton?"

"I am sick to death of Halifax, and do you know, darling, that I have, without consulting you, found out that the old Lacy d'Entreville *château* is for sale? Will you go and live there with me by that French river that you love so much?"

Vivienne stopped skating, and looked up in surprise at him. They were in the midst of a deathly solitude. Not a creature was near, not a sound was heard, now that the swift striking of their skates against the ice had ceased.

"Stanton," she said dreamily, "I told you about Orléans, then later on of the other place still dearer to me for my mother's sake, of the strange mass of buildings heaped up beside the Loire, and the little village crouching below. Perhaps I said too much of my pleasure when I beheld those walls, and saw the tapestried chambers of my ancestors, and the great tower with its sloping ascent, where a carriage and pair could start from the town and drive up into the *château* ——"

"Vivienne," gently, "it was not any grandeur in your picture that touched me. It was the homeliness of it; the comfort of Madame la Princess' apartments, the loneliness of the servants, the care they were giving even to the dogs of their absent mistress, the interest of the villagers in you——"

"Yes," said Vivienne, "when we went into the lodge of the *concierge*, the dogs of the princess occupied all the comfortable chairs in the room, and the old man and woman sat on the stone window ledge. Ah, those white hounds! They were charming, Stanton, and they licked my hands."

"The princess will sell the *château*, reasonably too," said Armour kissing Vivienne's abstracted face. "You will go, sweetheart? We can live in Paris for half the year."

"Stanton," said the girl with startling emphasis, "did I tell you that it was like home to me?"

"No, my child, but I guessed that it might easily become so."

"Never, never! France is beautiful, but this is my home," gazing about her. "This Canada, that France so basely deserted. The English conquered us, protected us, and now the British flag is mine. We are Canadians, Stanton, you and I; do not talk of France, and yet—and yet," losing her enthusiasm and speaking with a sweet and feminine softness, "if it is for your good I will go to a desert with you."

He opened his mouth to reply to her, but she laid a finger across his lips. "Stanton," eagerly, "are you sure you would be happy to leave here? You have great cares, great worries; but reflect —you are no longer a boy. Can you tear yourself from your native land, and become happy in another where you know no one? I think perhaps you might even long for some of the old anxieties. Are you sure that you would not regret the change?"

"I am sure of nothing except that I love you," he said passionately; "and I will not do anything that you do not approve of."

"Then you will at once cease embracing me," she said, and darted away from him.

He soon caught up to her, and folding her fingers securely within his, went flying before the north wind over the ice and arrived at the Pinewood bank to find the skating party a dream. Every trace of it had vanished—even the smoking embers of the bonfire had been carried away. On coming nearer they found one solitary seat that had been left, and on it Vivienne's slippers laid conspicuously by her cloak.

"Stanton, I wish to do something for Joe," she said.

"Well, darling, what shall it be?"

"Will you always keep him, Stanton? He is a watchful servant."

"*We* will keep him," with gentle emphasis. "And now do you think you can do without an escort up the bank? I wish to see Joe about something at the cottage before he curls up for the night."

"It looks dark up there," said Vivienne wistfully.

"Oh, sweet story-teller!" said Mr. Armour with a low, happy laugh. "You fear nothing on earth, and you cannot play Desdemona, so do not try. You don't wish me to see Joe," and catching her up in his arms he hurried up the gentle acclivity, bending his face teasingly down to hers.

"If I ask you what Joe has been doing and why you are so subdued this evening, shall I hear another pretty prevarication?" he inquired, putting her down at the veranda steps.

"No," she said gravely, and as he stood beside her in the now rapidly falling snow, she mentally ran over her painful experience of the evening. Should she shock Armour with an account of the treachery of his wayward brother? No, a thousand times no.

"I am disturbed about something," she said at last deliberately, "but I do not care to talk about it."

"Will you tell me to-morrow?" he asked eagerly.

"No, nor the next day, nor any day," she re-

plied. "I beg that you will not make a mystery of it. Some one has offended me—and been forgiven. After to-night I shall put the matter out of my thoughts."

Armour's face grew dark as he listened to her. "Perhaps it is as well not to tell me," he muttered: "I should not forgive so easily."

CHAPTER XXX

LOVE WILL BUILD HIS LILY WALLS

LATE in the afternoon of St. Patrick's Day, Camperdown, in a smart new buggy that he had bought to please Zilla, but with Polypharmacy —whom he had refused to give up—harnessed to it, was driving along Barrington Street, that runs in a wavering line through the town and out into the country.

Since early morning there had been several kinds of weather—as is usually the case in Halifax on the seventeenth of March. The parade and demonstration in honor of the saint had been held in a driving snow-storm. Then followed brilliant sunshine and a high wind that rattled the masses of wires suspended over the streets, and tossed to and fro the banks of dead white snow heaped in billowy ridges against the black and muddy earth.

When Camperdown set out, another change had taken place. The wind had died away, and reluctant snowflakes were beginning to fall from dark, smoke-colored clouds that were slowly rolling in over the harbor.

The walking was slushy and disagreeable. Pedestrians in rubber footgear passed along the sidewalks, looking in the shop windows, where pots of pseudo shamrock were freely displayed, or entering stores and offices to transact business in the leisurely, unhurried fashion peculiar to the inhabitants of the city by the sea. Every Irishman wore a large tuft of green in his hat or his buttonhole, and many horses showed the nationality of their masters by proudly shaking their heads, whereon was the emerald rosette.

A crowd of boys on a street corner, rapturously engaged in watching one of their number, who was rubbing green powder on the back of the unconscious Mrs. Macartney, as she stood waiting for a horse car, attracted Dr. Camperdown's attention.

"You rascals!" he called to them, and suppressing a smile as they scampered away, he took off his hat to the lady and drove on. Past the City Hall he went, and steep Jacob Street, once the terminus of the ancient palisade wall that enclosed the early settlement of Halifax, and beyond which it was not safe for a white man to go unless he were willing to be scalped by the ever-watchful Indians, and entered into the dingy part of the street, where traffic to and from the railroad station is loudest and noisiest.

Below him was the dockyard with its arsenals, magazines, parade ground, and houses for officials,

and its few remaining trophies of the war of 1812. He looked grimly toward it; called up some of his father's stories of the day so many years ago, that the lads of the town ran to see the "Shannon" and the "Chesapeake" coming up the harbor with their decks stained with blood; and then smiled as he reflected on the ardent diatribes against war that he had heard from Stargarde and Vivienne.

Polypharmacy deliberately drew his hoofs in and out of the snow and mud in the street, and soon had his master to the suburb of Richmond and the contraction of the harbor, where the lovely, sudden, and beautiful view of the basin burst upon him.

Calm and quiet, surrounded by bold hills and dusky forests, it lay. Drawn half-way across it, as if giant hands had begun to stretch it there, and then had ceased, growing weary of their task, was a covering of white ice; where the ice ended abruptly the water was dark and tranquil. Five miles from him, at the head of the basin, nestled the little village of Bedford; and on the west shore his eyes sought and rested on lonely Prince's Lodge, a melancholy souvenir, with its ruined gardens and lawns, of a once gay place of sojourn of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent.

His survey of the basin over, Camperdown brought back his gaze to his immediate surroundings. Just across from him, by the broken piers of

a former bridge over the Narrows, were ships laid up for the winter.

"Potato ships probably," he ejaculated. "Get on, Polypharmacy; here's a train coming."

Polypharmacy crept on slowly, though his master had drawn him up between the railway track and a high, snowy bank with overhanging trees, up which he would find it impossible to go, no matter how frightened he would be. But Polypharmacy did not mind a train. When it came shrieking around the curve beside him, he merely flicked the ear next it in temporary annoyance, and proceeded philosophically on his way.

"Why, there's Stargarde!" exclaimed Camperdown, surveying a figure some distance ahead of him on the narrow road. "On some Quixotic errand, of course," frowning and hurrying after her.

Polypharmacy had shed his fine peal of bells with the sleigh, and Stargarde not hearing the carriage wheels in the soft mud, started slightly on hearing her name pronounced.

Such a rosy, laughing face she turned to him! But his annoyance did not pass away. "What foolishness is this? where are you going?"

"To see a sick friend near the three-mile house. And you?"

"Young man fell off a barn while shingling it; brain fever, and I'm attending him."

"That's my friend," said Stargarde.

"Then we'll go together," putting out a hand to assist her into the carriage.

"I think I would rather walk, Brian."

"I don't see why you should go rambling all over the country alone," he said, all his dissatisfaction coming out in one burst of irritability. "It's abominable. Where is your dog?"

"I didn't think I was coming out and Vivienne took him to the park."

"Will you come with me?" he asked in patient exasperation.

"Yes," and she stepped into the buggy.

He was in a wretched humor; but she was in one so gay, so light-hearted, that she gradually charmed him out of it.

Then, having yielded, he fell into an opposite humor, for he had long ago given up as impracticable the transparent fiction that he had ceased to love her with his former devotion.

"I am glad that we have arrived," said Stargarde laughing and blushing, as Polypharmacy of his own accord stopped short on the snowy, country road before a dull red farmhouse flanked by a yellow barn.

Camperdown, splashing through snow and water in his big, rubber boots, opened a long gate and looked at Polypharmacy, who accepted the mute invitation to come in and be tied to a "hitching post."

Stargarde walked up the little path which in summer time was bordered by flowers, and tapped softly at the door. A neighbor opened it and bestowed on her sundry confidences in half-tones with regard to the sick man, whose mother, she said was "clean distracted."

They sat for some time in the old-fashioned kitchen of the house, by an open fireplace in which sticks of wood burned and sputtered in a subdued way, till the farmer's wife came in from the sick-room, tears running down her cheeks. The doctor was going to stay a little while to observe her son's symptoms, she said, and she begged that Miss Turner would wait for him as the roads were too bad for her to walk home.

The neighbor rose, and busied herself in drawing a many-legged table from the corner of the room, spreading a white cloth on it, and putting deftly in their places a number of blue, willow-patterned dishes. When everything was in order on the table, she approached the fireplace, and swinging toward her the crane suspended over the blaze, poured boiling water from a teakettle hanging to it into a brown teapot that she placed in a corner of the brick hearth.

Refusing all entreaties to stay and partake of the meal, by saying that she must return to her family, she took leave of Stargarde, of the farmer's wife, and of the farmer himself, who at that moment came in.

The long twilight began to close, and still Camperdown lingered. The mother had been with him some time in the sick-room. Stargarde sat quietly consoling the farmer as she had consoled his wife.

"My son, my son, my only son," were all the words the old man could utter till Dr. Camperdown stood quietly beside him and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Mr. White, your son is going to get well, with God's blessing."

The old man started up, wrung his hand, ejaculated, "God bless you, sir!" and hurried from the room.

"They won't leave him," said Camperdown looking away from Stargarde who was wiping sympathetic tears from her eyes. "Mrs. White says for us to take some tea before we go. They'll be offended if we don't."

He lifted the enormous brown teapot to a stand on the table, and while waiting for Stargarde to sit down, walked noiselessly about the room scanning with curious eye the high cupboards, the ancient latches on the doors, the brass candlesticks on the mantel shelf, and the long oven set in the wall and arched over with brickwork.

Finally he came to a standstill at the table, and surveyed the various dishes that the farmer's wife in her gratitude had offered to them.

"Potted head, that she has made herself," he said; "rolls also. Her own brown bread, such as

bakers do not dream of; beans grown by themselves; pork from a porker off the farm; preserve of berries from her own little garden; eggs from her biddies; cream from her cows; doughnuts frizzled in the lard of her own swine. Come, Stargarde, will you say grace and pour the tea?"

"Yes, Brian," taking the chair that he placed for her, and examining approvingly and with feminine minuteness of observation the spotless cleanliness of the little table.

"You have picked up wonderfully," said Camperdown a few minutes later, moving the lamp in order that he might have a better view of her features. "I was worried about you two weeks ago."

"I am in excellent health now, thanks to your doses," said Stargarde with a laughing grimace that revealed to him the two rows of teeth that Zilla in her vile slang called "white nuns."

"Your tea is ready," she went on, holding out one of the big, blue teacups that he had sent to her to be refilled for the third time.

He had fallen into a sudden reverie, and seeing that he sat with eyes bent abstractedly on his knife and fork, Stargarde got up and took the cup around the table to him.

When she set it down he glanced up quickly, and was about to ask her pardon, but stopped short, the words arrested on his lips by the expres-

sion of her face as she stood looking down at him. At last it was a pleasure to her to minister to him, at last his "bird of free and careless wing" had been caught.

He grew pale, drew his breath hard and fast, and laid his hand masterfully over hers.

She started, and drew her fingers from him. Then with her throat suffused with color, and streaks of red across her white cheeks, she walked to the window and gazed out at a drizzling rain that had begun to fall.

Camperdown raised the cup to his lips once or twice without tasting the tea, then set it down, and with a last glance at the straight, lissome back of the disconsolate figure by the window, returned to his patient.

Stargarde glanced over her shoulder in a startled manner when the door closed behind him. "I must get away; I cannot go back with him. Mrs. White," to the farmer's wife, who came gliding like a happy ghost to her side, "I cannot wait any longer for the doctor; don't tell him I've gone."

The woman, hardly conscious of what she was doing in her rapturous state of mind at the prospect of her son's recovery, wrapped Stargarde's cloak about her.

"Tell him that I don't mind the rain and the darkness," said Stargarde hurriedly. "I need the walk; I will come again to-morrow to see you. I

am praying for your boy; good-night," and with feverish haste she slipped away.

Over the wet and sloppy road she went, sometimes breaking into a run, then walking so slowly that she scarcely seemed to be moving, her tortured face bent on her breast, or lifted inquiringly to the dripping sky above her. The road was almost deserted, but once or twice she shrunk aside to allow belated Negroes to pass her, who were urging on their horses in the direction of their homes in Hammonds Plains.

She did not choose the way by which they had gone to the farmhouse, but turned into the long stretch of road leading past the cotton factory, and skirting the wide common where military parades are held.

It was a highway cheerful enough on a bright day, but unspeakably lonely and dreary on a dark night, when sky and earth were alike mournful. Soon she sank down on a stone by the roadside, and burst into a flood of passionate tears. "I cannot—I will not—it is not right! O God, show me my duty." Then kneeling on the ground with her head against the stone, she prayed long and fervently.

It was some time before the struggle was over, the battle fought, but at last she arose, self under foot, as it usually was in her conflicts. She tried to shake the water from her garments, then patiently

plodded on in the direction of the town, the electric lamps shining like signal lights before her.

A splashing sound behind made her pause suddenly and look back. There were the two lights of the carriage, Polypharmacy looming between them like a mountain of a horse. Her heart beat violently. How acutely her lover had guessed that she would take this road to the town. A wild first impulse to hide from him made her slip into the shadow of a building that she was passing.

He was driving slowly, and at every few paces was putting out his head and narrowly inspecting the road. "Stargarde, Stargarde," she heard him say softly when he was at a little distance from her.

Something impelled her to go to him despite herself. "Here I am, Brian," she said with a final convulsive sob, and wearily dragging her limbs over the miry way.

He dropped the reins, put out both hands and assisted her in beside him. "Poor child, you are very wet," he said in his ordinary tone of voice; "you should not have run away from me." Then seeing that she turned her face to the cloth-covered side of the buggy, he forebore further question or remark, and they drove in silence across the Common and down through the town to the Pavilion.

There he sprang out and assisted her to alight, then followed her to her room where she sat down beside a bright fire and shivered slightly.

"You will at once change your wet things," he said.

She blushed deeply, but neither spoke nor looked at him till his hand was laid on the door. Then she turned her deep, blue eyes toward him. "Good Brian, dear patient Brian."

He drew a little nearer to her as if fascinated.

"So long you have had to wait," she said with an adorable smile. "Now——"

"You confess that you love me," he said quietly.

"Yes, with my whole heart and soul."

"You made a brave fight, Stargarde."

"Oh, I did not know what it was," she said ardently. "I knew love was not selfish, yet I thought it would crowd my people out of my affections to love you. Then I did not want to give up my will. I thought I had chosen my life-work."

"And what do you think now?" he asked, folding his arms and coming a little nearer to her.

"The love that I feel for you," she exclaimed, clasping her hands over her beautiful breast, "it makes me love humanity not less but more, a thousand times more. Every man is dearer to me for your dear sake, every woman because she is part of man——"

As she spoke she lifted her face to a photograph of the gemlike Garvagh Madonna that hung on the wall above her. The large hat, slipping from her golden head, showed numberless little rings of hair

curled tightly by the damp air of the evening. Her parted lips, her rapt expression, instead of drawing her lover nearer, made him suddenly retreat with a gesture of inexpressible pain.

Her features at once lost their unearthly expression. "Brian," she said, holding out her hands to him, "Brian, my dear boy——"

And still he hesitated. "What is wrong with you?" she asked in most womanly anxiety.

"You are so much above me," vehemently and brokenly, "I am not fit for you. You are like something holy. I dare not touch you."

"You will get over that," she said, shaking her head and smiling happily; "and I wish I were half as good as you fancy me. Come, dear lad, I will make the first advance. Here is a betrothal kiss for you; and then you must go home."

She got up, and for the first time the dimpled cheek was laid willingly against his, her arm slipped around his neck, and like a man in a trance of painful ecstasy he pressed his lips to the beloved head laid upon his breast, and heard her sweet lips murmur a tender prayer for a blessing on their united lives.

Then with a passionate embrace and a heartfelt cry of "Unworthy, unworthy," he hurried in his tumultuous fashion from the room.

CHAPTER XXXI

MACDALY'S LECTURE

VARIOUS apocryphal stories are told of Brian Camperdown's doings on the night that Stargarde Turner promised to be his wife. It is said that his blood being in too much of a tumult to allow him to enter his house and go to sleep, he started on a joyful and eccentric pilgrimage around the peninsula on which the city of Halifax is built.

Not satisfied with tramping over the dark and muddy roads of the Park, and the quiet streets of the city, he is said to have proceeded along the shores of Bedford Basin, and on the spot where more than a hundred years ago dead French soldiers, unhappy members of the expedition of 1746, were discovered sitting under the trees, their useless muskets by their sides—he, by a fitful gleam of moonlight, carved his own and Stargarde's initials on the smooth-coated bark of a maple.

A story also exists of his having been seen eight miles farther on, and of his startling a watcher by a sick-bed by a glimpse of his ecstatic face looking through the cottage window; but this one is uncertain, and has never been corroborated.

Certain it is, however, that at daylight he returned home neither footsore nor weary and still in his state of exaltation. He let himself in by means of a latch-key, made an elaborate and prolonged toilet, then restlessly haunted the lower rooms of the house, waiting for some one to wake up to whom he could impart his joyful intelligence.

Old Hannah was the first person to come down-stairs. To her, blear-eyed and affectionate, he, with an agonized twisting of lips, in order that he might not shout his news to the entire household, announced the fact that he was shortly to be married.

His ancient nurse staggered back as if she had received a blow, and fell in a rickety heap of bones on the hall floor. He lifted her up, administered restoratives, and presently had the mortification of seeing her burst into tears and stumble down to the basement.

"And she professes to adore Stargarde," he muttered, backing in discomfiture into the dining room to avoid the two smart maids, who were tripping down the staircase in snowy caps and aprons.

Warned by his experience with Hannah, he said nothing to Mrs. Trotley and Zilla beyond a polite "Good-morning," till they were well on with their breakfast. Then, with a diminished spirit, he cautiously informed them of the approaching change in his condition.

Zilla had been talking volubly, but at his words she snapped off a sentence on her lips, let fall her porridge spoon, and gave him a look that made him quail.

Mrs. Trotley was more to be pitied than Zilla. At the close of a long and unhappy life the lines had fallen to her in pleasant places, and these pleasant places she naturally supposed she must forsake should her patron marry. Yet she had command enough over herself to endeavor to hide her feelings. Camperdown's keen eyes, however, pierced through her disguise, and even while she was uttering her congratulations to him, and wishing that Stargarde might enjoy every happiness, he saw the two salt tears come rolling slowly down her cheeks.

She knew that he saw them, and was overcome by confusion. "We have been very happy together," she murmured apologetically.

Zilla made no pretense at self-control. Pushing herself violently away from the table she ran upstairs, where Camperdown knew she would cry till she made herself ill.

"What a monster I am!" he soliloquized, excusing himself from the table and hastily making his way out of the house. "Only the author of all these troubles can heal them."

He walked rapidly toward the Pavilion, stopping once on his way there to order a gift of fruit and

flowers to be sent immediately to Mrs. Trotley and Zilla.

Stargarde was at breakfast, and laying a bunch of roses, flowers that she passionately loved, beside her, he drew up a chair and with a dismal face begged for a cup of chocolate.

"I have to give you up," he said, swallowing the scalding liquor with alarming taste and rolling his twinkling eyes at her.

"Have you?" tranquilly.

"Yes; my family doesn't approve," and he related his domestic troubles to her.

"Dear things, how they love you!" and she gazed caressingly at him.

"I wonder what would make me give you up?" he muttered.

"I will go and see Mrs. Trotley and Zilla and poor old Hannah," she said thoughtfully.

"You don't wish them to leave my house, do you?"

"Oh, no, no; I am accustomed to a large family. We shall all live happily together."

"Are you ever going to stop eating bread and butter?" he asked impatiently. "That is your fifth slice."

"Why should I?" with a mischievous dimple showing itself in her cheek.

"This is malice aforethought," he said firmly, sitting down beside her, and withdrawing a morsel

of bread from her hands. "Now," holding her wrists, "give me a kiss, sweet, passionate soul in a passionless body."

"Don't speak in that way," she said, kissing him. "It sounds as if I had no feeling."

"Well, you haven't. You say 'dear Brian,'" mimicking her, "and then it is 'dear granny,' and 'dear Bobby,' and 'dear everybody.'"

She laughed merrily. "Would you have me striding to and fro and glaring at you, and looking daggers over my shoulder as you do?"

"No; but you might be a little more demonstrative. Women don't know how to love. You're nothing but a proper old maid. The time was when I would have cut my throat for a kiss. Lord, what agony!"

She looked at him sweetly, and as he would not release her hands gently laid her cheek against his face.

"You are a beauty and I am a beast," he said abruptly; "aren't you afraid of me?"

"Why should I be afraid of you, Brian? You don't love me for what you are pleased to call my beauty, nor do I love you for what you are pleased to call your lack of it. There is something beyond that."

"Yes, yes, my angel; I do thank the Lord that I have found one woman that can look into my soul."

"In sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, in life and in death we are for each other now," she said. "How lovingly you would cherish me were I suddenly to become old and ugly and unattractive. Brian, last night at the three-mile house when you looked up at me at the table——"

"Yes, darling."

"I had been thinking about your patient; then the thought suddenly came to me, 'Suppose this man too, should become ill—should die?' My heart seemed to stand still. I thought I should suffocate. Oh, Brian, take good care of yourself. I fear that I could not say, 'the Lord's will be done,' if anything should happen to you," and burying her face in his shoulder she began sobbing violently.

"Come now, this is idolatry," he said, looking down at her with a radiant face; "rank idolatry, and you will be punished for it according to your own pleasant theory. I wanted you to be demonstrative, sweetheart; but not along this line. When will you marry me?"

"Whenever you think best, Brian. I have given up worrying about this place. The Lord will provide some other person to take care of the people. We are none of us indispensable to him."

"No," he said gravely. "When will you marry me?"

"In three months, Brian."

"In six weeks, beauty; and when shall I see you again?"

"To-morrow afternoon."

"This evening, my charmer."

"Brian," she said, clinging lovingly to his arm, "I suppose nothing would induce you to live in the Pavilion."

He made a wry face. "I'll come if my wife refuses to live in any other place."

"Your wife will do as you wish," said Stargarde.

"You sweet creature, and blessed man that I am!" and with a final embrace he left her.

Stargarde spent as usual a busy day, and at six o'clock sat down to a brief and lively repast that Vivienne and Judy came in to share with her. After the tea things had been put away, she invited them to go with her to a large room used for general assembly purposes by the tenants of the Pavilion and called the kitchen.

The two girls gladly accompanied her, for the cheering and consoling of the different members of Stargarde's enormous family had become their chief occupation. They walked along to the large apartment, glancing across as they did so to the bathroom, washhouses, and co-operative baking establishment, in the courtyard, with the working of which they had become quite familiar.

"Isn't this jolly!" exclaimed Judy when the kitchen door was pushed open.

At one side of the extensive and irregularly shaped room, heaped-up logs blazed in a vast cavern of a fireplace. No other light was needed. The floor was a painted one, and the furniture consisted of a number of plain wooden rocking-chairs for children and grown people, a few small tables, and a piano situated in a dusky corner.

At this piano a red-coated soldier was seated, singing amorously, "I'm so 'appy; so terrible 'appy," to a maiden hovering sentimentally over him. Some children sprawling on the floor were tossing jackstones, and two gray-haired men at a table were intent on draughts.

An old woman, known as "granny," sat knitting by the fire. There was alway a granny in the Pavilion, for when one died Stargarde immediately got another, saying that the spectacle of an aged person among young ones, beloved and waited on by all, was one of the most humanizing experiments she had ever tried.

She gave a kind "good-evening" to the people in the room and then approached the old woman. "How are you, dear granny?"

The venerable knitter was in a bad frame of mind, and at first would vouchsafe no answer, but pretended to be greatly occupied with picking up a dropped stitch. In response to another appeal she said irritably that she was "cruel poorly," and there was "death in the wind."

"Draw the curtain behind granny," said Stargarde, motioning one of the children to a window. "She doesn't feel well. What can we do to cheer her?"

"Make some sweet stuff," said Judy, who was philosophically inspecting the drawn and crabbed face. That will tickle her palate—and her vanity too," in a lower key.

"Happy thought!" said Stargarde. "Dick and Mary, will you go to my rooms and get a saucepan?"

Ten minutes later a pot of candy simmered on the coals sending out a fragrant cloud of steam that the old woman sniffed appreciatively.

Soon other people began to come in—more soldiers and more girls, happy in the knowledge that they might carry on legitimate love-making in shadowy corners under Stargarde's vigilant but sympathetic eye.

The boys of the Pavilion took turns at doorkeeping, for the kitchen was kept open at all hours. This evening a small red-eyed lad officiated, and to his shrill remarks Vivienne and Judy listened in concealed amusement.

"You can't come in," he said abruptly to a lad of his own size who was shouldering his way past him.

"Why not?" fiercely; "you ain't Miss Turner."

"I'm her doorkeeper, and she'll not have you."

"Why not?"

"Cause you're dirty."

"Yer lie."

"Can't I smell?" said the other indignantly. "If you don't go and take a warm bath, which you can have for nuthin'," pointing to the courtyard, "you can't come in here. Now get."

"I sha'n't; I'm comin' in."

The doorkeeper stood his ground. "You don't need fine duds to come here," he said eloquently; "Miss Turner 'll stand rags or anythin', but you've got to be clean. She hates dirt."

The boy silently withdrew, but presently came back his face shining with a cleanliness that was evidently unusual and painful to him.

Just as the door closed behind him Dr. Camperdown and Mr. Armour entered, both irresistibly drawn thither by the presence of the women they loved.

Camperdown stepped in boldly and confidently. He was a frequent visitor to the place. Armour came in more quietly and looked about him with some curiosity.

It was an interesting scene. The flames of the enormous fire brightly illumined the faces and figures of Stargarde, Vivienne, Judy, granny, and the children, who were in the foreground, and the groups at the various tables in the middle of the room. The retiring few who had withdrawn to the window

seats and corner benches were not so plainly to be observed.

All were on an equality. There was no sharp drawing of class lines possible in Stargarde's vicinity, and every face in the room was for the time a contented face.

Armour and Camperdown sat down near Stargarde and looked about them while listening to the overpowering strains of a melancholy swan song that came sobbing and crying from the fiddle of a blind man who sat in a corner of the room.

A club-footed boy, hitching himself over the shining floor, occasionally stirred the molasses in the pot on the stove, and after a time, to the great delight of the children, poured it out in a number of shallow buttered plates and took it out to the veranda to cool.

Shortly after the exit of the taffy plates, the doorkeeper, who was a lad not deficient in a sense of humor, caught sight of a new guest, and with an exaggerated flourish announced in his shrillest tones, "Lord Skitanglebags!"

MacDaly stepped gallantly forward, smirking and bowing to the assembled company and taking in good part their subdued laughter and humorous salutations.

He had arrayed himself in white stockings and tan shoes, a faded red military jacket, a parti-colored sash and a pair of shiny black trousers. In

one hand he carried a sword, and in the other a black silk hat. This hat he adroitly turned upside down, thereby allowing to fall upon the floor in front of Stargarde a small roll of manuscript.

"MacDaly," she exclaimed, surveying in amusement his beaming face and the gray locks brushed smoothly upon each side of his gleaming bald pate, "You don't mean to say that you wish to give us another lecture?"

"A topical lecture, lady," meekly.

"It is better to be frank, isn't it?" she continued.

"Yes, lady; oh, yes. Frankness is the privilege of great minds."

"Your last lecture was too long," she said. "Two mortal hours we had to sit here and listen to you. It wasn't fair, MacDaly, for we are all tired people and come to the kitchen for relaxation. We don't want a formal programme, and though it is very interesting to hear about Napoleon and St. Helena, you shouldn't entrap us into listening to you when our minds aren't in a receptive condition."

"True, lady, true, most unfortunately true; but yet," depositing his tall hat and his sword on the table, and tentatively unfolding his manuscript with a roguish gleam in the tail of his eye, "yet if I might be graciously vouchsafed just one humble corner wherein to amble away in figures of speech

those listening who felt in that manner disposed, those not attending who felt in any way so inclined, I might, could, would, and should——"

"Go on, man," said Camperdown with an imperious gesture, "and don't bore people to death."

MacDaly blinked maliciously at him, stationed himself against the wall at a short distance from the fire, and drawing a reading desk toward him placed his manuscript on it.

"Does the time serve my presumption?" he asked presently, peering about the room through a pair of spectacles.

No one heard him. The soldiers were playing games at the tables with their sweethearts, and the other men and women were engaged in conversation. Stargarde, Vivienne, and Dr. Camperdown were talking to a sad-faced girl who had just come in; Judy had slipped to a cushion on the floor and was being initiated into the mysteries of jackstones; and Mr. Armour was absently stroking his mustache and looking into the fire.

Nothing daunted MacDaly cleared his throat and began, "Be it known to all men that somebody said something about Lady Stargarde Turner and her systematic family——"

"Hear him," said Dr. Camperdown; "he's talking about you, Miss Turner."

"MacDaly," called Stargarde in her clear sweet voice, "you mustn't be personal."

"Oh, no, lady, no, not for worlds."

"It is better not to mention names," she went on.

"To hear is to obey, lady, as the Turks say when their wives talk to them. We'll conclude that the subject of this brief discourse is a person called Nameless, otherwise Bombo Elephanto."

"Very well," she replied turning back to the girl.

MacDaly, sighing heavily, ran his finger down his manuscript, obliged by Stargarde's dictum to skip a paragraph of proper names. "Well, time rolled on," he said at last, "and as it is customary in the finishing-up dance, be it as it may, war dance or otherwise, some one has to pay the piper, this great Mohawk or Mogul as I may call him, Bombo Elephanto, ferociously sets to work teeth and toenails to kill a crow for himself."

"What under the sun is he at?" growled Camperdown.

"Hush," whispered Stargarde; "I fear he is on the subject of Colonel Armour. MacDaly has a grudge against him because he sneers at this establishment of the Pavilion, and this is the way he has of settling it. If he is too explicit I shall have to stop him."

"Bombo Elephanto," resumed MacDaly, "being aroused into some of the mental affections to which he is recently subject, professionally entitled to be periodical hemidemicrania——"

"H'm; this sounds interesting," muttered Camperdown.

MacDaly eyed him cunningly. "Ha, the gentleman with the beetling brows is more interested now than he was at first."

"Does he mean me, the rascal?" growled Camperdown.

Stargarde, suppressing a smile, laid a finger on his arm, and MacDaly in high glee that he had begun to attract the attention of the people in the room, hitched his desk a little nearer to the fire and continued rapidly. "This is firmly believed on account of his many times talking aloud incoherently to himself, and showing a triumph by swaying his hand with great violence as he walks along in company with some unsightly sprite or other in commune with him. Shame, shame, I say, as all do say, upon him who would foully and peevishly urge wrong from his rancoured breast to falsely gratify his own appetite and earthly wicked desires by such assiduous passions."

"Oh, oh," groaned Dr. Camperdown; "said the pot to the kettle, thou art blacker than I."

"Such a being," pursued MacDaly with uplifted voice, "cannot expect much else than to meet a bad end. Yea, melt like butter before the sun. Only picture the awful end of such a man and in comparison with the terrific state of Turkey, where there is to come an overpowering smashup and

the dethroning of the sultan. How will this country be governed? I prophesy that on account of the graceful form, figure, and noble bearing of Lady Stargarde Turner," he felt himself now far enough in the favor of his awakened audience to disregard the command about proper names, "her chances are many of being made sultana."

The *habitués* of the kitchen highly approving of the honor proposed for their patroness interrupted MacDaly by such a clapping of hands that he paused for an instant to mop his gratified face.

"Anticipating her ruling such a barbarous, uncouthed people with a steady rod," he hurried on, "and reducing the price of raisins and figs, I would cast a prophetic glance into that future and prophesy again that Mr. Stanton Armour——"

Armour withdrew his eyes from the fire and cast a haughty glance at the speaker, which was totally disregarded.

"Will be prime minister," contined MacDaly. "And Dr. Brian Camperdown," he pronounced the words with a mischievous relish and a gasping emphasis, "will be chosen by the sultana as her sultan."

Deafening and violent applause broke out, for the news of Stargarde's engagement to Dr. Camperdown had spread through the city with almost incredible rapidity.

Blushing slightly she noted the grim, contented pride displayed on Camperdown's face, then listened to MacDaly, who was hastening on.

"Oh, what a mighty change will be in that realm! I may say that cruel Turkey will be divided and subdivided into a large number of provinces and that a parliament will be produced by the brilliant ascendency of its future sultana."

"Stick to your text, man," interpolated Camperdown. "We don't want to hear nonsense about Turkey. Keep to Halifax."

"Now, my most noble and illustrious audience," uttered MacDaly suavely, "before I close, may I express the humble hope that as in the contingency of future events we may not all of us ever meet again under this ardent and hospitable roof, yet we may confront each other where high and low society are also not visibly recognized, but where all who are immaculate enough to get there get into good society, where, to use a homely and worldly phrase, Jack is as good as his master, oftentimes better, my friends, that is, if poor Jack has got a depraved individual for his master, as many of us have. Here, in this most noteworthy family, where again to use a domestic and wooden proverb as I may call it, signifying that every tub must stand on its own bottom, poor Jack can never hope to be as good as his master, for he has been felicitous enough to have for master the Lady Star-

garde Turner, who always speaks in the most amply persuasive and gentle tones to her inferiors at all times and who is bountiful in the largeness of her heart and the wonderful magnificence of her nature."

MacDaly paused here to bow profoundly to Stargarde, then casting an observing glance upon his amused audience, decided that a further dose of her praises would be acceptable.

"Before exclaiming farewell," he said, again lashing himself into a state of ardor, "let me ask what further thing I can say of this noble lady who has ever wielded the battle-axe of moral suasion on behalf of helpless and attenuated humanity. Perhaps I should not use the word battle-axe in connection with a lady of such refinement who has so long protected the weak, fed the hungry" (here he looked over his manuscript with a grin and said, "I can prove that"), "clothed the naked" (he grinned again and said, "I can prove that too"), "and magnificently struck out for the right. Therefore trusting that she may pardon her humble and obsequious servant when he says that the mighty things she has accomplished have struck terror into the hearts of evil-doers, comparatively speaking, and can only properly be compared to work done with an axe—yea, and a mighty work at that. In conclusion, I may say that I hope we shall meet many times more in health and wealth, happiness and

abundance of affectionate recollections of our past and present meetings. So farewell for the present; and believe me to be, ladies and gentlemen, your very well-wishing and obliged servant, Derrick Edward Fitz-James O'Grady MacDaly. Thanks, very much."

The lecturer bowed, put his manuscript in his pocket, and mingling affably with his hearers received with modesty the joking compliments showered upon him.

Stargarde watched him in intense amusement.

"Why is he fiddling with that sword?" asked Camperdown, sauntering up to her.

"Oh the entertainment is only half over," and she framed an announcement that she wished him to make.

Camperdown rose and proclaimed in a stentorian voice, "The future sultana of Turkey orders an exhibition of sword exercise by Professor MacDaly."

Everybody sat down, and the Irish Nova Scotian modestly retiring behind the reading desk from which a perfectly clear view could be had of his proceedings, stripped off his red jacket and drew his sword from its scabbard. Striding to the middle of the room he looked in Stargarde's direction, and began prancing on one foot and then on the other ejaculating, "Right guard, left guard, cut, thrust, parry," etc., and swinging himself backward and forward with such startling rapidity that the

lookers-on were obliged to tumble into corners and nearly fall over each other into the fire to avoid what seemed to be an avenging weapon.

It was a frolic for MacDaly, and the fun grew fast and furious, till Stargarde, noticing Armour sheltering Vivienne and Judy behind a heap of chairs, and looking as if he thought the performance a trifle undignified, gave the signal to stop.

The children present were shrieking with laughter, but their faces were sobered when the doorkeeper flung the startling announcement into the room that the candy had been stolen from the veranda.

"Buy more," exclaimed Camperdown. "Off to the restaurant with you! Here's money—and order cake and coffee for the grown-ups."

MacDaly approached Stargarde with a mincing step and murmured something about his confident audacity that would seize the passing moment.

"Certainly," she replied, "but coppers only. I'll take the silver away from you."

The delighted man accordingly made a circuit of the room, his heart gladdened by the clash of Canadian cents descending into the capacious receptacle of his tall hat.

Upon the arrival of the refreshments a time of feasting began in the kitchen. The soldiers, with the efficiency of trained waiters, took charge of the coffee and cake. The children revolved huge lumps

of taffy in their mouths, and Armour with something like dismay watched the alarming disposition of sweets by the aged granny.

Stargarde was just about to send the rioting children bedward, when her attention was attracted by a commotion at the door.

Camperdown sprang up, but he was too late. What he had dreaded for weeks, with an agony of shame and dread, had come to pass. Of no avail now his lavish bribes and ceaseless supervision.

The astonished doorkeeper had received a blow on the chest, and had gone spinning into a corner of the fireplace, whence he skipped nimbly and stared at his assailant; tattered, unspeakably dirty, Mrs. Frispi, who towered in the doorway wrathful and menacing, mumbling something in a drunken fury at him, which no one understood.

With a low, joyful cry Stargarde sprang up and went to her. At last the woman had come to the Pavilion of her own accord.

"You be a beauty, bain't you?" said the woman thickly, "barrin' the door to yer own mother."

Stargarde did not quite catch her words. Camperdown did, and tried to draw his *fiancée* back.

"No, Brian," she said firmly. "I have waited a long time for this. Let us get her in by the fire."

Close at the woman's heels, like a cowed, sulky dog, walked the small man, her husband. "Come in too," said Stargarde, extending a hand to him.

"We be turned out," he said, with a covert glance about the room, and hanging his head as if the bright light hurt his eyes. "No money; big man say, 'You go to de streeta.'"

The woman in exasperation at the withdrawal of attention from her, seized Stargarde by the shoulder. "Don't you hear?" she gasped hoarsely. "I—be—your—mother."

The words were audible, though indistinct. A surprised, incredulous look overspread Stargarde's beautiful face. "Brian," she said, turning to him as if she could not trust the evidence of her own sense of hearing, "what does she say?"

He would not repeat the words, but in his ashamed, mortified face she received confirmation of her own half-born idea.

"My mother!" she exclaimed, still in a dazed state of semi-belief; "my mother that I have searched for so long!"

"Yes; you be my daughter, and what be daughters for but to work for their mothers?" snarled Mrs. Frispi, suddenly collapsing and sinking into a chair. "And—who's that?" she stammered, turning her swollen, distorted face toward Stanton Armour, who stood in handsome, deathly pallor, and as motionless as a statue beyond her.

"Oh, my God!" and mouthing, swearing, unutterably foul and repulsive, she groveled from her chair to the floor.

"Oh, tell me, some one," cried Stargarde wildly, "what is it she says? Is it true?"

"It be true," said Frispi eagerly. Then stepping forward he plunged his hand among the rags over his wife's broad chest and withdrew a filthy envelope, out of which he drew a photograph that he handed to Stargarde.

It was a picture of Mrs. Frispi, taken in her palmy days. Stargarde laid a hand on her own fluttering breast. There was a counterpart of this florid, sensuous face that she had treasured for years.

She drew out her own photograph. It was exactly like the other; her intense blue eyes darted to the floor. There in that tall form, in the evil face, she could see a faint, disfigured likeness to herself.

"O God, I thank thee!" she said, and fell on her knees to put her arms about the degraded creature before her.

Where was the terror, the repulsion, the anguish that the sight was to cause her? Camperdown gazed at her in distracted astonishment, then hopelessly surveyed the hushed, motionless ring of people beyond them.

"Brian," said Stargarde, in tones of ineffable love, "we must take her home."

At the first shock of her words, he started back with a gesture of utter detestation. He loved her, but he could not touch her mother.

Then he sprang forward, but he was too late. Neither disappointed nor surprised by his refusal, Stargarde gathered the loathsome and disgraceful specimen of fallen womanhood to her own tender bosom, and lovingly enwrapping it in her arms went out in the night.

CHAPTER XXXII

HE KISSED HER AND PROMISED

THE spring was long, cold, and trying. The sun shone brightly, but the north wind sweeping over the ice-fields in the Gulf of St. Lawrence breathed chill and disconsolate on shivering Nova Scotia until well into May.

Then to the great delight of the robins, that had come back rather earlier than usual, and had been greeted by a snowstorm, there was a change in the weather. One leap and they were into the jolly summer, clad in his "cassock colored green," and having on his head a garland. Swelling tree-buds, bursting flowers, and universal greenness prevailed. During the latter part of May, energetic work was carried on in field and garden in preparation for the brief but lovely season which lasts in the seaside province through June, July, and August, until the golden days of September and October come.

The twenty-first of June is the natal day of Halifax, and on this day an annual concert is held in the lovely Public Gardens. The flower beds are roped off, electric lights shine far overhead among

the treetops, and lines of Chinese lanterns and rows of torches glow nearer the earth. Two or three military bands play favorite airs to thousands of people, who saunter to and fro listening to the music, haunting ice-cream booths, or watching the effect of fireworks set off from a small island in the center of a pond from which unhappy ducks and geese fly, quacking and gabbling their disapproval of proceedings so disturbing.

From one of these annual concerts held on a perfect June night, Mrs. Colonibel, Vivienne, Judy, and Mr. Armour were returning. Judy, exhausted by much walking to and fro on the Garden paths, had fallen asleep in the carriage with her head on Armour's shoulder. Mrs. Colonibel and Vivienne sat with faces upturned to the dull blue of the sky listening, the one absently the other intently, to Armour's description of the wonderful Wolf-Rayet stars.

His voice was calm and measured, yet Vivienne had known all the evening that something had happened to worry him. When they reached the house, and Mrs. Colonibel and Judy went upstairs, she lingered an instant as she said "Good-night."

There was no response to her glance of inquiry. Whatever his trouble was he had resolved not to impart it to her, and she slowly proceeded to her room, and putting aside her hat, sank on a heap of cushions by her open window and looked out in

the direction of the Arm, which lay like a dull, solid expanse of crystal at the foot of its lines of wooded hills.

It was a dark night, and she could see nothing very distinctly. There was a slight murmur in the pines about the house, but beyond that the stillness was perfect. Her thoughts were on the cottage, though she could see nothing of it. Things were not going well there. Valentine had finally taken up his abode with his father, and they rarely saw him up at the larger house. This evening Vivienne knew that Colonel Armour was entertaining some of his friends. Probably that was the cause of the shadow on her lover's brow, for she knew that he strongly disapproved of his father's midnight parties.

"Then why does he not say that they shall not take place?" she uttered half aloud, as she thought of the burdens that Stanton Armour was obliged to carry. "I would not endure it were I in his place."

"A woman only has power over Ephraim to weep and implore and make supplication unto him," said a voice behind her.

Vivienne scarcely turned her head. She had become fully accustomed to having Mammy Juniper creep upon her at all times and seasons. Ever since the day that the old Negro woman had seen Stanton Armour's magnificent diamond ring flash-

ing upon Vivienne's finger she had changed her tactics with regard to her. The girl was to be taken into the family, hence she must be treated with respect, and strange to say, in a very short time she was as much fascinated by Vivienne, and as completely under her influence, as she had formerly been antagonistic and threatening to her. Her insane prejudice, which had been largely a matter of duty, entirely passed away. The girl's slight imperiousness exercised the same charm over the Maroon woman's half-crazed mind that it did over Joe's stolid one, and she followed her new mistress about with offers of service and petitions for the privilege of performing some of her ancient duties of lady's maid, that sometimes amused and sometimes annoyed Vivienne.

To-night she stood motionless for some time beside the reclining figure, then seeing that the girl did not wish to be disturbed, moved softly about the room, turning up the wicks of the different lamps, arranging the furniture and gathering up books and papers, till finally coming back to Vivienne, she saw that she had fallen asleep.

Deftly, and with a gentle touch, the woman drew out the large pins that confined the girl's hair, and allowed it to fall in a dusky mass over her shoulders, then dropping a rug over her sat down and watched her.

"To-day the chaff driven by the whirlwind came

into my room," she muttered, "and the doves went mourning about the house. The anger of the Lord is about to come upon us; woe to him that sets his nest on high. Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee? Ephraim has brought shame to his house by cutting off many people. For the stone shall cry out to the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Woe to him that buildeth a house with blood."

The night wore on and Vivienne, undisturbed by Mammy Juniper's mutterings, still slept. There was no sound to break the deathly stillness inside and outside the house, till shortly after one o'clock the girl started up with a low cry of "Stanton!"

Mammy Juniper went over to her. "Awake, my princess, the hour of the Lord is at hand."

Vivienne's dazed glance took in the black figure standing over her, the bright lamps of the room, the darkness outside, then she shuddered. "I have had a distressing dream. Is Mr. Armour here? I thought that he was hurt."

"Mourn not for the elder but for the younger branch, O princess," chanted the old woman. "Ephraim is a proud man. He transgresseth by wine, neither keepeth at home. He enlargeth his desire as hell and as death, that cannot be satisfied."

"Hush, Mammy," said Vivienne.

"Can you not hear the feet of him that bringeth

bad tidings?" rejoined the woman. "Howl, O fir trees, for the lofty cedar has fallen—howl, ye oaks of Bashan, for the forest of the vintage has come down. Woe, woe to him that buildeth a house with blood!"

Vivienne shuddered again, and to avoid looking at the blending of wrath and suffering on Mammy's ugly face, leaned far out of the window. Down in the direction of the cottage a sudden confused noise had arisen, followed a few seconds later by a sound of footsteps hurrying over the walk to the house. She listened intently till the person below came up to the veranda steps and rattled a key in the door of the back hall. "There must be something wrong at the cottage," she said, getting up and walking across the room, "and that is Joe."

"Joe goes as a snake by the way, my princess," said Mammy seizing a lamp and following her. "It is Vincent."

Vivienne went out into the hall and looked down over the railing of the circular opening at the night-light burning outside Armour's door.

Vincent was coming quietly upstairs. His feet made no sound in passing over the thick carpet and he had only to tap at Mr. Armour's door to have it thrown open to him.

He said a few words in a low voice that they could not hear, then disappeared as quickly as he had come. In a very few minutes Armour

emerged from his room, thrusting his arms into his coat as he hurried after his servant.

"O Ephraim, he that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face," mumbled Mammy Juniper in a choking voice. "Keep the munitions, watch the way!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Vivienne; "what has happened? You speak knowingly."

The old woman suddenly became calm. "Come and see," she said quietly.

Vivienne followed her down the staircase. The house was intensely still. No other persons were stirring. When they reached the lowest hall Vivienne paused. "Mammy, I shall not go down there among those men. Do you go and bring me back news of what has happened."

Mammy looked at her regretfully. "The Assyrians led by Ephraim bring reproach upon themselves. Only a princess of the house can warn and deliver."

"I know what you mean," said the girl proudly; "but I cannot be sensational. I will speak to your master. Now go and see if you can be of any use."

She walked into the dining room, and the old servant carefully placing the lamp in the middle of the long table, left her alone.

There was a clock on the mantelpiece, and with a dull and heavy sense of apprehension Vivienne

watched the hands scarcely moving over its face. Twenty, thirty, forty minutes passed, and still Mammy did not come.

At the end of that time there was a step in the hall and she hurried to the door to be confronted by Stanton Armour.

"Are you here, Vivienne?" he asked in a kind of subdued surprise.

"Yes," and she anxiously scanned his gloomy, dispirited face.

"You had better go to bed. Why did you get up?"

"I had not gone to bed. I fell asleep by my window after I came home, and waked up when I heard Vincent coming for you."

He made no reply and she went on: "What was the trouble, Stanton?"

"Valentine got himself into a scrape."

"That unhappy boy!" she said mournfully.

"Do not worry," said Mr. Armour, trying to clear his face, "it may not be so bad as we think."

"How bad is it? why do you hesitate?" she said in a low, disturbed voice.

"I do not like to tell you disagreeable things, Vivienne."

"Am I a doll or a child that I can endure nothing? I do not like to be so treated, Stanton. What was Valentine doing?"

"You know that he has been drinking lately?"

"Yes."

"This evening when my father and his guests were at supper Valentine came in and made some remarks that they considered insulting."

"Indeed!"

"And they drove him into a corner, and some one threw a wineglass at him; I hate to tell you this, Vivienne."

"That is no surprise to me."

"They had all been drinking," he went on a little doggedly; "and in some way or other they have hurt Valentine's eyes. I fancy that he continued to be irritating, as he knows well how to be, and they continued shying wineglasses at him. They didn't mean to hurt him."

"And Vincent heard them and came for you to break up this pleasant party?"

"Yes."

"How are they leaving here?"

"Vincent is driving them."

"And he is taken from his rest to do so?"

"Yes, unavoidably so."

"Have you sent for Dr. Camperdown?'

"I have."

"And Mammy Juniper is with Valentine?"

"She is."

"And you are half annoyed with me for coming down," she said, seizing a handful of her long, hanging hair and pushing it back from her face.

"No, only worried about Valentine."

"Is there nothing more than that?"

"Nothing more that I care to tell you," he said evasively.

"You are pale, you suffer," she said in a low voice.

He gently put back her masses of perfumed hair so that he might see her face more distinctly.

"What a simpleton I used to be," she suddenly exclaimed; "so young, so deplorably ignorant!"

"Why do you say this?"

"Because I thought that engaged people entered upon a dream of bliss; while you—the more intimately I know you the higher rises some dreadful, dreadful barrier between us. Stanton, tell me, tell me why you are so moody and restless with me lately? Do you not wish to marry me?"

He stooped and kissed her lustrous eyes. "You are mine, mine," he repeated in accents of repressed passion. "Would to God that you were my wife now."

"I feel like a restless wave beating against a rock," she said mournfully. "Am I never to share your troubles?"

The hand resting on her shoulder trembled, and she saw that he was wavering in his hitherto fixed resolve not to confide in her.

"Now—now," she said eagerly; "tell me to-night. If you love me, trust me."

"I am racked with anxiety," he muttered. "What you ask me to do is the right thing, yet you may shrink from me; you may never marry me."

"Have you ever done anything dishonorable yourself?"

"No; but I have shielded my own flesh and blood; more from instinct than from affection, perhaps, I have done it."

"Then I will never give you up," she murmured.

Her beseeching arms were around his neck and he could no longer resist. In halting accents, that were sometimes angry, sometimes ashamed, he told her all she wished to know, and she listened, still clinging to him, but with her hair bound about her face so that he could not see its expression.

When he finished she drew a long sigh, and he found that she was crying.

"Well," he said, "are we to be husband and wife, or must we separate?"

"We shall never separate, if it rests with me," she said gently. "But why, oh, why did you dislike my mother?"

"I will make it up to the daughter," he said, and vehemently. "Can you not see, Vivienne, that if things had not been as they were I would have been spared my worst anxiety?"

"I am so shocked at the wickedness of the

world," she said, "so shocked! I never dreamed of it when I was at school."

"Yes," he said gloomily, "it is a bad world."

"But there is much goodness," she went on with a sudden radiance of face; "and I am not one to say that the world becomes worse instead of better."

His face brightened. "Yes, men and women do each other good as well as a frightful amount of evil."

"And you feel better for telling me this, do you not?"

"Yes; I have been carrying on a wearisome struggle these last few weeks. You will preserve my confidence. There is no one else to whom I talk; no one who knows me. You, my dear innocent lamb," and he suddenly became loverlike and tender, "are the only being in the world that understands me."

"You will find my father for me?" she said softly.

"If it is a possible thing; there is no news yet."

"And when he comes you will try to clear him? Yet stay, Stanton; can you do nothing in his absence?"

"I scarcely think so."

"Is there no one who knows? What about Mammy Juniper and MacDaly, who talk so strangely about your father? You are silent. Re-

member, Stanton, I too have a father. Tell me, would you clear him to-morrow if you could, though at the expense of disgracing your own parent?"

"Yes, I would," he said.

"That is enough," she said in a low, intense voice. "Have no more scruples about marrying me. I take the responsibility."

She gave him her hand like a princess, and leaving him standing, a lonely figure in the half-lighted room, went toward the hall to Mammy Juniper, who was waiting for her.

He stood for some time after her departure, staring at the floor, till he heard in abrupt language:

"Where is Mammy Juniper?"

"She is upstairs," and he lifted his head to see Camperdown pawing the hall carpet like an impatient horse.

"I want some linen, and I wish that she would come down to the cottage. By the way, Stanton," and he paused as he was about to fling himself out of the doorway, "how much longer are you going to let this thing run on? Fristram and Shelly were here this evening gambling with your worthy sire; the young scamps ought to have been at home with their wives."

"I know," wearily; "but what can a man do? I am reproached now with having thrust my father out of doors."

"Nobody that understood the facts would blame

you," said Camperdown seriously. "But can't you hedge him around with restrictions?"

"If I draw too sharp a line he will leave here."

"And you don't want him injuring the family reputation elsewhere. But isn't there any way you can devise of keeping these silly young flies from him? Let him amuse himself with old spiders like himself."

"He must do it in future," said Armour.

"Who made you promise?" asked Camperdown curiously.

"Vivienne."

"I thought so; good little girl!"

"I have decided to send Valentine away till after our marriage," said Armour; "can you suggest any one to go with him?"

Camperdown frowned, hesitated, and muttered: "Better wait a bit."

"You do not think that his eyes are seriously injured, do you?" said Armour quickly.

"I think nothing, and what I know I'll keep to myself," and Camperdown again made an attempt to leave the room, but turned on his heel to come back and say, "Your ancestors were Puritans, weren't they?"

"Yes."

"Strictest of the strict and fastidious about Sundays, and would scarcely smile on week days?"

"Yes."

"And they grew rich and were high in favor with God and man?"

"So the family history assures us."

"Then they waxed self-indulgent. Your great-grandfather began a merry dance that is culminating with your father and Valentine, and you—poor, dull, and misanthropic clod—would dry up and sterilize but for that lovely little simpleton upstairs, who is probably dreaming that you are a Prince Charming."

An indescribable air of animation took possession of Armour's heavy, handsome features. "She probably is," he said with a smile.

"If you've any sense at all," continued Camperdown with assumed disdain, "if you've any idea of perpetuating a decent family line, agree to anything she says. In her fine-spun, aristocratic, philanthropic notions, which are strictly opposed to all that is earthly, sensual, and devilish, is your only salvation." And with a volley of menacing glances he vanished, and shortly afterward crunched under foot the gravel below as he walked toward the cottage muttering: "Blind, blind! Poor fools, how will they stand it? Better Puritans than Sybarites!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

A WAYWORN TRAVELER

FOR eight weary weeks Stargarde had, in the opinion of her friends, been afflicted by the terrible being who undoubtedly was her mother. But to Stargarde it was no affliction. From the night that she had taken the miserable creature in her arms, washed and fed her and laid her on her own bed, it had seemed rather a joy and privilege than a duty, to wait upon her. Cheerfully and uncomplainingly she placed herself at the disposal of her unworthy parent, guarding and restraining her as far as she possibly could, and making no ado when she was missing, but patiently seeking her in the lowest haunts of the town as a shepherd would seek a lost sheep and return it to the sheepfold.

After Mrs. Frispi had been with Stargarde for four weeks her wanderings suddenly ceased. Her evil genius might prompt her to roam, but it was no longer in her power to do so. Her frame, strong as it had been, suddenly yielded to the effects of disease brought on by her irregular life. She lay on her back in Stargarde's bed with no thought in her guilty soul of preparing for that

longer, more mysterious flight than any she had yet taken, but raving day by day in obscene and abominable language that made Camperdown look in despair and admiration at Stargarde, who in an agony of compassion hung over the unhappy woman and urged her to repent.

Day by day he entered the sick-room, sometimes greeted sullenly by the sufferer, at others hailed by a torrent of abuse that made him turn from her with a shudder of disgust; but gradually there came a change. During the past ten days his patient had lain in a sullen, stoical silence, apparently indifferent alike to her sufferings and to Stargarde's tender ministrations. That she used no more reckless language was something to be thankful for, and with a sense of relief to think that he was no longer in the den of a wild beast, Camperdown stepped into the room one Sunday morning.

He held his *fiancée's* hand one instant in his own, then went to the bed and glanced sharply over Mrs. Frispi's attenuated features. She did not look at him, even when he laid his fingers on her bony wrist, for her big blue eyes, slowly revolving in their sunken sockets, were following Stargarde as she moved about the room.

"Let me take your temperature," he said.

Mrs. Frispi shook her head impatiently.

"Mother," murmured Stargarde appealingly, coming to stand beside her.

At this the woman submitted, and when she turned her head toward Camperdown he noticed that a softened look had overspread her features, and that tears were stealing down her cheeks.

In order to give her time to compose herself he affected to be busy with his instrument case.

A side glance presently cast in her direction showed him that the tears were still on her cheeks and also that she was not anxious to avoid his scrutiny.

"Are you going to throw her over?" she asked quietly.

Camperdown stared at her.

"Are you going to throw her over on account of me?" asked Mrs. Frispi, again indicating Stargarde by a motion of her head.

"No, I am not," he said decidedly.

She made a sound of satisfaction in her throat and went on coolly: "She forgives me, but you will not. You would have kicked me back in the mud. She pitied me. She reminds me of the good people that I was with in New York for a little while when I was a girl. No one has cared for me since. I couldn't help myself. Suppose she had been brought up where I was."

Camperdown frowned at the horrible possibilities suggested. Yet he took comfort in the sturdy character of his betrothed. "She would have been good anywhere," he said stoutly.

"Have you lived in the slums?" said the woman with a sneer. "Could an angel be good with a thousand devils after her?"

He did not reply to her otherwise than by a shrug of his shoulders.

"And you won't forgive me for disgracing you," she went on in a kind of languid surprise; "and you call yourself a Christian."

"Brian," said Stargarde with a passion of entreaty in her voice.

"I do forgive you," he said not unkindly, and after a short struggle with himself; "but you can't expect me to admire you."

"Admire me!" she exclaimed, burying her face in the pillow. "Oh, my God!"

A few minutes later he left the Pavilion and went to his home.

The next day and the next and the next Camperdown saw Mrs. Frispi, but she did not speak to him. He saw that she was becoming weaker, and also that she was in a quieter, calmer mood.

"To-night she will probably die," he said on the evening of the third day, "and I shall take Mrs. Trotley and go to Stargarde."

While he was at dinner a message came from the Pavilion for him and for Zilla. The end was coming sooner than they had imagined it would.

Zilla hesitated about going; not that she feared death, for she had seen many people die, but from

purely selfish motives. It was a rainy evening, and she would rather stay at home and read one of her beautiful books than to go out to witness the end of a person who was utterly uninteresting to her.

"I cannot wait," said Camperdown, "and I think that you ought to come with me. There is a cab at the door; you won't have to walk."

Zilla flashed him a swift glance, darted upstairs for her cloak, and went with him.

It was certainly not a hateful sight that they witnessed when they left the rain and darkness of the street and entered Stargarde's cheerful rooms. Every light was shining brightly. Mrs. Frispi's sight was almost gone, and to enable her to see some objects in the room that she dearly prized, Stargarde had even had additional lights brought in.

The woman lay quietly among the pillows of her snow-white bed, the gaunt framework of her bones almost piercing through the thin covering of skin. Stargarde sat by the bed and in a recess was a girl dressed in the uniform of the Salvation Army.

"It is no use," Mrs. Frispi was uttering in short gasping breaths, as Camperdown and Zilla paused in the doorway; "I can't see them—tell me."

Around Stargarde's room hung a number of paintings illustrating an old hymn that she was fond of singing, Two years before an English artist, poor and drunken and expelled from his native land, had found a shelter till his death in the Pa-

vilion. In gratitude for Stargarde's kindness to him, he had painted a series of pictures for her, representing the adventures of the wayworn traveler that he had so often heard her singing about to a quaint, wild tune.

On these paintings hanging around her bed Mrs. Frispi's eyes had often rested, and Stargarde, thinking that no more applicable story could be framed to suit her mother's circumstances, had, in talking to her, woven biblical truths with the progress of the weary traveler. The striking pictures and the graphic words had impressed themselves upon the sin-worn mind. Even now, when her earthly vision was dulled, the dying one had before her mental gaze the representations of the traveler toiling up the mountain, his garments worn and dusty, his step slow, his eyes turned resolutely from the enchanting arbors where sweet songsters invited his delay to the top of the mountain, beyond which were the heavenly vale and the golden city.

"While gazing on that city,"

repeated Stargarde gently,

"Just o'er the narrow flood,
A band of holy angels
Came from the throne of God.
They bore him on their pinions
Safe o'er the dashing foam,
And joined him in his triumph;
'Deliverance will come.'"

Her voice died away, and Zilla sank into a chair while Camperdown stepped softly to the bedside. There was nothing that he could do for his patient; the shadow of death was already upon her face.

Yet she lay quietly, as quietly as a child about to fall asleep, and giving no sign of distress or emotion except in the hurried and labored rise and fall of her chest.

"I believe in God now," she said solemnly, and moving her almost sightless eyes toward him. "I believe in everything. Oh," with a sudden great and bitter cry, and straining her gaze in Stargarde's direction, "what a wrong I have done her!"

Stargarde held one of her mother's hands in her own. At her despairing words she seized the other and folded them both between her strong, fair palms with a consoling clasp.

"I wish to go to heaven because she will be there," said the woman, starting up in bed with a last exertion of strength. "I cast her off when she was a baby, and she kisses me!"

Camperdown hastily pushed more pillows behind her and moistened her lips with drops of a stimulant beside him.

"I can see plainly now," she went on, opening wide her blue eyes with their strange and touching expression. "Zeb, mind what she says and don't vex her. Take good care of her, you," she continued, addressing Camperdown. "I forgive you

now; I could have killed you before. I hated every man. I forgive all"—brokenly—"as I hope to be forgiven—even him."

Her breath fluttered convulsively for a few minutes, then she sprang forward: "I hear them—the song of triumph they sing upon that shore. Jesus hath redeemed us—to suffer nevermore," she added. "O Jesus, do not despise me—I am sorry."

Her last words were spoken. She fell back in Camperdown's arms and he laid her head on the pillows.

Stargarde's face was shining like that of an angel. For many days he had seen her kneeling by that sick-bed, had heard her pleading voice, "O God, give me this soul; save my mother and take her to heaven." Now her heart's desire was gratified, and he feared that after the long weeks of watching and confinement to the house a collapse would come; but there was no sign of it yet. Very calmly she asked Zilla if she would care to stay in the room while Camperdown left it. Zilla remained; and Stargarde, while performing the last tender offices for her mother in which she would receive only a small amount of assistance from her friend of the Salvation Army, talked sweetly to the child of the triumphant entry of their mother's spirit into heaven, and of the putting away of the deserted body under the grass and the flowers where it would lie till the joyful resurrection.

Death had before this been connected with all that was squalid and mysterious and unlovely in the child's mind—not a thing to be feared among people who led reckless lives, but rather to be hated and shunned.

When she at last left the Pavilion and put her hand in Camperdown's for him to take her home, she remarked sagely, "I shall not mind dying, now that I am rich."

CHAPTER XXXIV

A FOX CHASE

IT was just dinner time at Pinewood. All the house doors and windows were open, and the sound of the gong reached the ears of a man who was mincing down the avenue. "Ha," he said stopping short, "the honorable lady will be partaking of some comestibles. It will be advisable that I dally away the time till she shall be lured without by the refreshing delightsomeness of the evening." And skirting the edge of the lawn and perceiving Joe he made his way down to the sunny slope.

"A handsome day, Mr. Lo," he said, saluting the Indian, who raised his head to stare at him.

Joe responded by an "Ugh!" and bent again over a small rent in his upturned canoe. After a short silence his curiosity got the better of his reserve, and he said, "Why you call me Lo? I Joe."

"'Lo, the poor Indian,' don't you know the poetry?" asked MacDaly. "With me it is the generic and epidemic name for the aborigines of this province."

Joe gave him a sleepy look from his dark eyes in which there was no hint of displeasure. "What you want?" he asked bluntly.

"I am about to enter upon, or in some way engage in a private interview with a certain favorably disposed personage distinguished by many gifts and graces, but whose name I will not take upon my unworthy lips," said MacDaly; "but what have we here? The honorable Lady Stargarde must be in the vicinity, judging by the appearance of her scout."

Mascarene, delighted as only a city dog who is kept in a close street can be when removed to open fields, came frisking and jumping down the incline. His frolic over, he fawned on Joe, who was intensely fond of him but scarcely glanced at him, and sniffed in a friendly manner around MacDaly who, while lauding him to the skies as a captivating canine, cared for him not at all.

"What you gottum for Miss Debbiline?" asked Joe of MacDaly, who was pirouetting to and fro to keep out of the way of the dog.

MacDaly, rather taken aback, mumbled that in the event of not seeing the young demoiselle he had a small communication addressed to her that he would be obliged to have some one deliver, and he twirled between his thumb and finger a soiled three-cornered note.

He did not offer it to Joe, nor did Joe take it

from him, yet in a somewhat bewildered fashion he saw that the sly Christmas had it, and was transferring it to his pocket.

"Ah, well-a-day, it is of small import," he muttered, while watching the Micmac draw his canoe up on the grass.

"Me hot," said Joe; "workum no more till morning. You want money?" he added inquiringly.

MacDaly's eyes brightened. Money! was he not always wanting it?

"You come with me," said the Indian mysteriously, and MacDaly fearing no treachery followed him.

If he had heard an order that the Indian had received from Mr. Armour a few days previously his heart would not have been so light as it was. "Joe," Armour had said, "that man MacDaly is troubling Miss Delavigne. If you see him about here send him away." And Joe, who in his heart despised MacDaly, had grunted acquiescence.

Trippingly MacDaly stepped after him to the shore immediately behind the cottage, where a long black rock ran out so far that if the cottage were dropped off the end of it the tops of the chimneys would not be seen above the water.

"You come here," said Joe, going to the end of the rock and kneeling down.

"Buried treasure, eh?" said MacDaly gloatingly, "or perchance something sunken in the rock

and the savage unaware of its value wishes to receive the opinion of an expert and—what are you doing, you rascal?" he spluttered as he felt the Micmac's hand on his collar.

"You dirty, me washum," said Joe playfully, and still gripping the astonished Irish-Canadian by the back of the neck he swung him off the end of the rock and soused him up and down in the water.

"I'm not dirty," pleaded MacDaly piteously, "and for the love of mercy do not let go your hold of me or I shall sink like a stone."

"You bad man," said Joe; "you teaseum Miss Debbiline. You say, me don't speakum her more."

"I promise; ye gods and little fishes hear my vow!" cried MacDaly, when Joe allowed him to come far enough out of the water to clasp his hands. "Oh, let me out, let me out!"

"You been bery bad," said Joe seriously. "Me priest now. You sayum sins quick."

MacDaly with alarming rapidity rattled off a number of venial transgressions. He had recovered from his first alarm and was reflecting that the Indian did not wish to hurt him but only to frighten him, that the water was agreeably cool, and that he had on his second-best suit of clothes.

"You done worse than that," said Joe. "Tell-um worse thing you done," and he let MacDaly down in the water till his ears and eyes were covered.

"Oh, mermaids and cuttle fish, I can't!" his victim gurgled and spluttered.

"Must," said the Micmac, dipping him again till the crown of his head was immersed.

"I burnt a building," gasped MacDaly in real fright. "Now let me out," and for the first time making resistance he clung to the rock with his hands.

Joe allowed him to clamber up beside him. "What you burnum?" he asked.

"A building," groaned MacDaly, patting his dripping sides. "Alack, alack, I'm very wet."

"You ever hunt fox?"

"No."

"Great sport; you be fox, me hunter. This be dog," pointing to the bewildered Mascarene, who had been in the water swimming around MacDaly waiting for a chance to rescue him, and who was now sitting staring at him. "Run," added Joe.

"But there would be no confidence existing," said MacDaly protestingly.

"Run," said Joe, who had not the slightest idea of his meaning, and MacDaly with a sigh skipped nimbly over the wall. Away up at the top of the hill he looked back and fancied that he was to be allowed to escape, for Joe stood motionless with the dog beside him. MacDaly could not resist making a derisive motion of his hand, but repented immediately and bitterly, and with a plaintive

squeal of dismay fled in the direction of the town, for hunter and dog bounding like two stealthy panthers were after him.

A few minutes later Joe was shaking his small remaining amount of breath from him. "What you burnum?"

Still MacDaly would not tell him, again Joe let him off, but only to resume his chase, till at last the unfortunate fox, bedraggled, exhausted, and overcome, told him the secret of his life.

Joe with a noiseless step returned to the cottage, and lay in wait under a larch for Mr. Armour, who always came down to see his brother some time during the evening.

"Mr. Val sleepum," he said an hour later when Mr. Armour was about to pass him, "and cunnel away. This for Miss Debbiline, from Daly," and he held out the three-cornered note. "Daly say," he went on, "that he burnum warehouse. Miss Debbiline's father not do it. Daly happen go early to warehouse. He go in office, find cigar, he smokeum. He no business there, hearum noise, run out. He 'fraid some one catchum. He drop cigar—must sparks fall, he not know. Not do on purpose. He 'fraid tellum."

"Where is MacDaly?" asked Mr. Armour sternly.

"Gone home. I tell him go see you in morning."

"Do you think that he will do so?"

"He sartin come," and Joe, laughing musically, withdrew and left his master standing as if spell-bound under the trees.

Stargarde and Vivienne walking to and fro on the lawn waited a long time for Armour to return. Finally he came slowly toward them. "Here is a note for you, Vivienne, from MacDaly," he said.

The girl took it from him. "It is too dark here to read it. Let us go into the house. His productions are so amusing. 'Miss Delavigne!'" she read when they three stood beside a lamp in the drawing room; "'if it had pleased an all-wise Providence to place me in a different walk of life and I saw a black man—a thoroughly black man—at any period of time I should really consider him worthy of the intrinsic offering of one solitary lucifer match for a slight midsummer present. Though simple as it may appear, it would be as truly acceptable by my honorable self as it would by the black man, and it would by all means show you a lady undoubted. With a profundity of respect, Derrick Edward Fitz-James O'Grady MacDaly. P. S. This wonderful match would be to illuminate a fellow's pipe.'"

Vivienne turned the paper over with a bewildered face. "It is enigmatical. Does he wish matches, Stargarde?"

Stargarde clad in a long black gown that made

her seem paler than usual and her hair brighter, softly drew her fingers across Vivienne's cheek. "He wishes a dollar, my child."

"You have given this man a good deal of money, have you not?" asked Armour.

Vivienne blushed. "Not very much. He talks to me of my father."

"Will you not leave him to me? I promise not to hurt his feelings. I will give him some work."

"Yes, I will," said Vivienne; "but why do you look at me so peculiarly. He has something to tell me," turning vivaciously to Stargarde, "and he won't say it."

"Not to-night," he replied with a sigh and a smile and a look of inexpressible affection.

CHAPTER XXXV

HER WEDDING DAY

"A WILD bird in a cage; a trapped beauty and a disconsolate beast," muttered Camperdown late in the evening of the day of his marriage.

He sat in a corner of his drawing room, his eyes riveted on Stargarde's back as she stood holding aside the lace window curtain and gazing out into the street.

"It seems to me," he went on grumblingly, "that I've seen a picture called 'Alone' or 'At Last' or some such rubbishy name, where a bridegroom, and bride having got rid of all their dear friends and relatives are hanging on each other's necks; this isn't much like it," grimly. "What is it now, Stargarde?"

"I thought I heard a child crying in the street," she said, coming to rest on the sofa beside him.

"You are nervous," he said, smoothing back the curls from her brow, and noting with a pang at his heart the unearthly pallor of her face, from which every vestige of its usually delicate color had fled. "Your entire specialized apparatus for receiving irritation is up in arms."

"I am usually counted a steady, firm person, Brian."

"You're like all women; you want careful treatment at times. Look at this fine hair, this thin skin, these muscles, small, though they are strong; and don't tell me that you haven't a nervous temperament."

"I wonder how they're getting on at the Pavilion?" she said dreamily.

He looked down at the head lying on his shoulder with an aggrieved expression. "The Pavilion, the Pavilion, always the Pavilion. It doesn't matter about me."

"I am afraid to think of you," she murmured.

"Why?"

"I am frightened, nay, terrified at my own happiness, when there are so many sore hearts in the world."

"She's lying, sweet soul," he communed with himself as he stared at her; "there's no happiness in her heart. She's nearly frantic in this decently furnished house and on this quiet street away from her offscourings. It's like tearing her soul from her body to give them up. Stargarde!"

She did not hear him.

"Am I to lose her now?" he reflected with sudden anguish; "now, on the threshold of happiness? She's dropping into one of her 'misery of the world' agonies, and if she goes off this time! Stargarde,"

he said almost roughly dislodging her head from his shoulder and jumping up, "I'm going for a walk."

"Are you?" she said with languid surprise.

"Yes. Getting married and being in a crowd indoors all day doesn't agree with me. Do you know where I'm going?"

"No."

"Up to Rockland Street, to look at the house where you have slept for so many years, with your narrow white bed dragged against the wall so that even in your sleep you might be near the people who passed on the street."

She smiled faintly at him.

"You come too. Your namesakes are all out. It is a lovely night."

She hesitated, but he went to the hall and seizing a cap and a shawl from the hat-rack, came back and put them on her.

"I feel as if I should fall," she said rising unsteadily.

"Nonsense, my dear girl; nerves again. Take my arm and you'll be all right when we get into the street. You're better now, aren't you?" he asked as they strolled along the flagged pavement.

"Yes," she murmured absently.

"Don't dawdle," he said, "but let us go briskly, and breathe all the fresh air we can, and don't go to sleep but talk to me. Stay, I'll do something

amusing. Lean against this wall for a jiffy till I see if I can jump this barricade. If I can't, you shall have twenty dollars for your soup kitchen. Now, Camperdown, distinguish yourself," and to Stargarde's mild amazement he proceeded to the middle of the street where some repairs were being carried on, and running back attempted to leap over an erection of planks.

Again and again he went at it, stumbling, falling, and never once clearing it, though it was a marvel to Stargarde that with his great agility he could not do so.

While she stood smiling at him, some one came around the corner of the street. "Ha, ha!" she heard in a laughing voice, "how much for the exhibition? Has matrimony gone to your head or your heels, Camperdown? I beg your pardon, Mrs. Camperdown, I did not see you," and a young man who was a friend of Valentine's took off his hat with a flourish.

"Hurrah, I've cleared it!" vociferated Camperdown with a final leap, after which he approached them; "but your soup kitchen sha'n't lose, Stargarde. How do you do, Dana?"

Mr. Dana saluted him with a succession of teasing remarks. "Is it an eviction? If not, what do you mean by dragging your wife through the streets at this hour? This comes of setting yourselves up to be models for your neighbors—refusing wedding

presents and not taking a honeymoon trip. You'll come to a bad end. Why don't you leave him, Mrs. Camperdown?"

"Any news, Dana?" inquired Camperdown agreeably.

"Nothing but your marriage, with which the town is ringing. All the little newsboys are running about patting their stomachs in satisfaction."

"My wife wished to give everybody a feast," returned the physician, "though she did not feel much like entering into it herself on account of her recent affliction."

"She looks horribly pale to-night," said the younger man, lowering his voice so that Stargarde who was standing at a little distance from them should not hear.

"That's why I have her out," said Camperdown with a sudden burst of confidence; "I feel like those classic fellows who used to get entangled with goddesses, thinking that they were mortal women. That wife of mine is so ultra-human that though she is happy herself she can't go to sleep till she knows that everything is straight in her old home."

"I'm glad you haven't been beating her," said Mr. Dana serenely, "for as you say, she is beyond the human. Who takes charge at the Pavilion now that she has left it?"

"The Salvation Army—it is too much for one woman."

"What was your objection to a wedding tour?" asked the young man curiously.

"There it is again," said his companion in an aggrieved voice, "everybody is badgering me about it. I've no objection to tours of any kind, but I can't go proclaiming through the city that my wife isn't fit to travel. People are utterly senseless about traveling, which is one of the most fatiguing things on earth. They come to me saying, 'Doctor, I'm run down, no appetite, can't sleep—where shall I go?' 'Go to bed, you idiots,' I say, 'and sleep and eat and take your journey when you recover.'"

Mr. Dana laughed at him and held out his cigar case. "Have one, you will find it composing."

"No, thank you," and Camperdown threw a keen glance at his wife. He saw that Mr. Dana's chatter had partly roused her from the state of deadly languor that always preceded her severe paroxysms of pain, and in intense relief he ejaculated, "Glad we met you, Dana. Good-night," and offering Stargarde his arm, he proceeded along the street in a leisurely fashion.

Arrived on Rockland Street, they paused outside the dark windows of her deserted room, then walking softly inside the courtyard, skirted the walls of the long building. The lights were nearly all out and the people were asleep. Here and there a feeble gleam told of a sick-bed, and Stargarde, who knew

the condition of all, murmured a prayer as she passed such places. Finally her silent adieux were said and there was no longer an excuse for her to linger.

"Remember Lot's wife," said Camperdown dryly when she paused under the archway to look back.

She turned to him with a troubled face. "Never mind, Philanthropia, I am only joking," he said, suppressing a laugh. "It is a satisfaction to you to see that they are all resting quietly without you, is it not?"

"Yes; my work is done here," she murmured.

"But you can still come back, sweetheart. Here is one gnarled sinner that will be greatly edified by pilgrimages to the Pavilion."

She clung to his arm without speaking, and as they sauntered out to the street he muttered, "I mustn't bother her with talk. She won't slip back into that state again."

Passing quietly by one door after another, they came suddenly upon a slight, gentle-faced young man with a weak, irresolute mouth, who stole like a ghost around the corner and put his foot on the lower step of a small house with dormer windows.

Camperdown looked at him narrowly without speaking, but in an instant Stargarde's hand was on his shoulder. "Charlie, you are not going in there!"

He blushed, frowned, and bit his lip.

"Now for the last time I speak to you about it," said Stargarde. "I want you to decide to-night. Will you not promise me—this is my wedding night, you know. One can refuse nothing to a bride."

A bride, and such a bride—and on those upper streets by those stealthily closed houses. The boy, for he was scarcely more than that, looked strangely at her. The cool night wind came sweeping down the street blowing to his ears the striking of a distant bell.

"Charlie," breathed Stargarde in tones of supplication, "you must promise me. You were once such a good boy; and your father—I think," she said, putting up one of her white hands to her face, "that he was one of the best men that God ever made. Every one loved him."

The young man saw with manifest distress the tears trickling down between her fingers. "For Heaven's sake, Miss Turner, compose youself," he said. "Come, I will walk back a little way with you."

"Promise her, boy," said Camperdown, coming up and clapping his hand on the young man's other shoulder.

"Your sister and your mother," whispered Stargarde, "you are breaking their hearts."

At the mention of his mother the young man's lip quivered. He hid his face in his hat that he

held in his hand, and Camperdown, withdrawing to a little distance, saw a hand uplifted to the quiet sky, and heard the muttered, "So help me, God."

Stargarde caught the attesting hand in her own. "May God bless you, Charlie; let us go a little way with you. You have made me so happy."

Side by side the three people went quietly to a house in the northern part of the town. As they stopped before the door, Stargarde said: "You will come to see me to-morrow evening and bring your sister, will you not?"

"Yes, I will," and the voice had a new ring of truth and cheerfulness in it.

The distinct tones reached the ears of a woman in a widow's cap who knelt by an open window above. With dry eyes from which all tears had long since been shed, she strained her gaze after Stargarde and her husband, and when they had vanished she threw herself on the floor, and with a sob of thankfulness prayed for the best of blessings on their married life.

Not a word was spoken between them till they reached the parade in the center of the town. There, in the shadow of the City Hall, Camperdown eyed one of the benches on the grass and guided Stargarde's footsteps to it. "You are tired," he said. "Let us rest a bit."

In three minutes she was sound asleep with her head on his shoulder. Camperdown drew the

shawl more closely about her, then sat thinking, not at all of the historic spot that they were on, with its old-time memories of *feux de joie* and drilling of troops, nor of the lords and the ladies of ancient days whose fair faces used to brighten the old stone building that stood on the site of the present City Hall, nor of the terrible year of 1834 when the parade was dotted with tar barrels sending forth volumes of smoke to purge the air from the trail of the cholera demon. Neither did his thoughts wander to the old parish church across the street whose frame was brought from Boston in the year 1750, and whose timbers, if they could talk, would tell many a tale of gay weddings, and pompous buryings of gallant soldiers, whose bones now lie mouldering beneath its aisles. No, he thought only of the woman by his side, of her incomparable worth and goodness, of the little claim that he could put forth to deserve so great a treasure, until a shadow, falling across her face, caused him to look up.

A policeman, who had been observing them at a distance, had at last drawn near.

"Evening, policeman," said Camperdown. "Situation is peculiar, but can explain. I'm not a tramp, and I think you know my wife."

"Know her," said the man lifting his helmet from his head, "I have cause to know her, sir."

"She's been walking and is tired," said Camperdown. "We're just on our way home."

"'Tis too heavy a contract she's been under, sir," said the man respectfully; "one woman can't reform a city; but she's done a powerful lot. Since she came and the Salvation Army followed her, they say the badness has dropped off wonderful, and there's been less for the police to do."

"How long have you been on the force?" asked Camperdown, putting an end of the shawl over his wife's face.

"Three years, sir; 'twas your wife as got me on. I'd thrown up a good job in the country and come to the city, where I thought I'd better myself. I might have been in a heathen country for all the notice I got. Then my wife died and my little girl got fever and I was going to the bad when one day there was a rustlin' beside me just as if an angel had dropped down from the sky ——"

"The angel, I suppose, being my wife," said Camperdown with interest.

"Yes, sir, and she found me in work, and I'm a happy man to-day, and if there ever was any mischief a-going to happen to her, I'd like to be on the spot," and replacing his helmet on his head the man ejaculated, "Beg pardon, sir, for disturbing you," and stalked away.

Camperdown smiled and gently shook his wife. "Come, we must go; you'll get a stiff neck."

Stargarde pulled the shawl from her face, blinked her eyes at the electric lights staring at her, and

gazed at the back of the retreating policeman. "Where am I? Brian, why did you allow me to fall asleep? That is John Morris, isn't it? Mr. Morris, how is your little girl?"

The man turned and came back. "Well and hearty, ma'am, thank you."

"She's a dear little girl, and so fond of you," said Stargarde. "Take good care of her. Good-night, good-night," and she smiled kindly at him.

The man stood with hands crossed behind his broad back until she was out of sight. "Looking at her it seems as if 'twas easy to be good," he said with a sigh.

"How kind you are to me," Camperdown heard in his wife's musical tones as they were about rounding a corner.

"Am I?" meekly. "What is the latest proof of my goodness?"

"Bringing me out to-night. You did it on purpose to make me more contented."

"Is a similar excursion to take place every night?" he asked, trying to hide a yawn from her.

"No, no; you ridiculous boy," and stopping short she put up her other hand and rested her cheek against his encircling arm. "I don't believe that there is another man in the world who would be so indulgent to me."

"This is joy double-distilled!" he exclaimed. "We are acting that picture."

"What picture, dearest?"

"One that I saw somewhere," and he favored her with a brief description of it.

"You mean 'Married Lovers'?"

"Yes, that's it," he said excitedly. "Go on, please; keep your position and talk some nonsense to me; you are irresistible when you talk nonsense, Stargarde. Come now, you think me handsome, don't you?"

"Superlatively handsome, Brian," and she laughed gently at him.

"And sweet-tempered?"

"Exquisitely so; and personally I have no objection to continuing this," she said, lifting her head from his arm, "but there is a dear old man in a night-cap at that window over there who is peeping at us in petrified astonishment."

"Ugh! you brute," said Camperdown, turning to shake a fist at him, "go and get married."

"You absurd boy," said Stargarde, pulling at his arm; "come home; the poor creature may be married already."

"Poor creature! Stargarde, do you think marriage an affliction?" And then Camperdown's conversation became of a nature too personal and sentimental to be of interest to any one but to the woman who loved him so devotedly that in her opinion, "even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

CHAPTER XXXVI

BLIND

VERY quietly the warm weeks of July slipped away. Valentine had long since recovered, but had not yet been seen beyond the precincts of the cottage.

On a calm Sunday afternoon Vivienne left Mrs. Colonibel's room and went to wander about under the pines. Absently straying nearer the cottage than she was in the habit of doing, for she knew that Valentine did not wish to see her, she suddenly came upon him lying on his back on a grassy knoll, his hands crossed under his head, his face turned up to the sky, and in "a voice as sweet as the note of the charmed lute" caroling cheerfully the old song:

"'Twas I that paid for all things,
'Twas others drank the wine;
I cannot now recall things,
Live but a fool to pine.
'Twas I that beat the bush,
The bird to others flew;
For she, alas, hath left me,
Felero, lero, loo!"

With a pained face the girl stood for a minute looking at him, then softly attempted to withdraw, but his ear, sharpened to unnatural quickness, caught the sound of her step, light as it was.

"Who is that?" he asked. "Joe, is it you?"

"No, it is I," said Vivienne, advancing after an instant of hesitation.

"Oh!" and he listlessly dropped his head on the grass.

"May I come and talk to you?" she asked. "I have longed to see you."

"Yes, oh yes," and he raised himself to a sitting posture. "I would get up and find you a seat if I could."

"I can sit on this rug, thank you," said Vivienne a little unsteadily.

She placed herself a short distance from him and looked at the sombre trees, the blue sky, the bluer Arm, where a tiny boat was crossing to the other side—anywhere but at the handsome, weary face, with its disfiguring spectacles.

"Have you on a white dress?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And you have your favorite perfume about you," he said with a half-smile; "or are they real roses?"

"Real ones," and she put between his fingers a cluster of long, white, rose-shaded Rubens buds.

"You are crying," he said abruptly.

"Only a little," she murmured, trying to compose herself. This she could not do; for once she lost all self-control and burying her face in her hands she wept bitterly.

The young man's face softened as he listened to her. "Stanton has told me that you were breaking your heart about me. It is pitiful, isn't it? Twenty-five and at the end of everything. But don't worry; I've given that up. At first I raved and beat my head till it was sore against the bars of my bed, but it didn't do any good. I've got to submit," and with a painful smile he again stretched himself out on the grass.

"This is unpardonable in me," said Vivienne, resolutely wiping her eyes. "I am ashamed of myself. I shall not offend again. You can see a little, Valentine, can you not?"

"Not a glimmer."

Vivienne's lip trembled, but she pressed it with her teeth and went on: "When are you coming up to the house? It is forlorn without you."

"Never," he said gloomily. "What do you want of me there?"

"If I can hear your exquisite voice singing words of encouragement I think that I can bear any burden," said the girl wistfully.

"Oh, you wish me to keep you in good humor."

"It would be an important mission. I have learned the accompaniments of all your songs."

"Have you?" and his face grew bright. "I will come up—perhaps this evening. Were you planning to go to church?"

"Yes; but I would rather stay at home with you."

"Even if Stanton goes?"

"Yes."

He laughed shortly, and with none of the fierce jealousy of former days said: "We shall be good friends, you and I, when I settle down to this darkness."

"May I read to you sometime?" asked Vivienne.

"How clever you are," he said. "You have found out that I hate to have any one do anything for me and you want to wheedle me into getting accustomed to it. No, my dear *belle-sœur*, you shall not read your Bible and psalm books to me."

Vivienne smiled hopefully. "Sometime you will allow me to do so, and while we wait for that time there are other books. Now I must return to the house. *Au revoir*, my brother; God will make you happier."

"There is no God!" he exclaimed.

She looked down at his mocking face and then up at the serene vault of the sky above them. "No God! Valentine; no Creator of the world! I had hoped that by this time you would think differently."

"Prove to me that there is one," he said excitedly, "and I will believe you."

She stooped and laid a finger on his sightless eyes.

He understood her. "Do you think that your imaginary God has afflicted me willfully?"

"Not willfully, but lovingly."

"This is infuriating," he exclaimed, his face flushing violently. "A loving God who casts a created thing into a dark pit!"

"Oh no, no," said Vivienne sadly; "the creature does that. We cast ourselves into dark pits because we will not see the light of the world shining above us."

"But we are created with evil propensities that take us pitward, according to you."

"Evil propensities that we must not follow, for God will also give us strength to overcome them if we ask him."

"This is Stargarde's doctrine," he said sullenly. "I want none of it. You Christians are most illogical people. Primitive traditions, handed down through eighteen centuries and starting among ignorant, unlettered peasants and fishermen, are your rule of life. You can't prove a single one of your statements to be true."

"What is proof?" asked Vivienne.

"Proof? Why it is enough evidence about a thing to convince one and produce belief."

"And you think that Christians do not have that?"

"Decidedly not."

"I think that you are mistaken. Have you read the Bible through?"

"No."

"I believe that is often the case with people who criticise it," she said thoughtfully. "But you are acquainted with portions of it. Can you read without tears the Sermon on the Mount and the account of the crucifixion?"

He made no reply to her, and she continued, "If you take our Bible away, what will you give us to keep our feet from stumbling in the darkness of this world?"

"Let us rely on ourselves," he said proudly. "Man needs no surer guide than his own internal conviction of right and wrong. That is better than trusting to a fable."

"I do not think that we get on well when we take charge of ourselves," she said gently.

"I don't set myself up for a pattern," he said hastily; "I've been bad—you don't know how bad I've been."

"Poor Valentine," she murmured.

"You need not pity me. I was perfectly happy. You goody-goody people talk a lot about sinners' consciences troubling them. They don't. One isn't afraid of anything but being found out."

"If a conscience sleeps, how can it guide?"

"Well, I intended to let mine wake up some day, then I would sober myself and lead a steady life. Don't go yet. Tell me more about your beliefs."

She cast a pitying glance at his restless, unhappy face, and again sat down beside him. "I cannot argue learnedly with you, Valentine. I can only say that I believe in God and in his Son our Saviour, who will forgive our sins if we ask him, and that I believe in the Bible as his revealed word, and that I know I shall go to him when I die. It is a very comfortable belief."

"Comfortable! yes, for you; not so comfortable for the poor fellows whom you damn."

"'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,'" repeated Vivienne.

"An attractive myth," he said lightly; "and you Christians won't expose it."

"Why should one doubt a thing that one is sure of?" asked the girl with a puzzled face. "Here is proof enough for me: our glorious faith has been the light of the world; apostles, prophets, and martyrs have died triumphantly for it; Christians are the salt of the earth, and if you had your way and cast every Bible into the sea, our land would become a dreary wilderness of shame and confusion."

"Fanaticism!" said Valentine; "the Mohammedans talk as wildly as you do."

"Do not compare Mohammedanism with our holy religion. Christ came with peace on his lips, Mohammed with a sword in his hand. And what has Mohammedanism done for the countries where it is even now decaying?"

"It solidified them," said Valentine lightly. "So I have read. And all Mohammedans don't live up to the precepts of the Koran, you know."

"Mohammedanism is rent by frightful quarrels, and if you have read about it you know the immorality of many of its religious teachers ——"

"So are Christians immoral."

"That is because they do not live up to the teachings of our divine model. But I do not know that it is of very much use to argue with you, Valentine. You misunderstand so sadly. I have heard you reasoning with others—notably, one evening when you spoke of the crucifixion. You said that Jesus Christ could not have died in six hours on the cross, that he was only unconscious when they bore him away to the tomb. I wished to say, his broken heart—broken by the sins of the world; you forget that—but I was too much agitated. I think that we can only pray for you ——"

"I do not wish your prayers," he said quickly; "and I am not unhappy as you think I am—that is, about religious matters. You mistake me."

"If you think that my religion is a delusion my prayers will not affect you," said Vivienne; "but have you not a lingering belief in the creed of your forefathers?"

"No," he said stoutly, "I have not."

"Stanton has," she murmured happily; "I could not marry him if he had not."

"You are young," pursued Valentine; "do you ever feel a horror of death? What do you think would become of you if a thunderbolt should fall from the sky and strike you dead ten minutes from now?"

"What do you fancy would become of me?" she asked softly.

"I do not know."

"But I know," said the girl, looking with joyful eyes on the splendor of the setting sun. "I know whom I have believed, and I do not fear death, because I know that when my soul leaves this body there is prepared for it a dwelling more glorious than anything I can imagine. That is the end of my belief, 'I *know*,' and the end of yours is, 'I do *not* know.'"

He turned his blind face toward hers and pictured to himself its transfigured expression.

"Will you not come to the house now?" she said quietly. "Stanton will be delighted to find you there for tea."

"I suppose you think that I am too wicked to be

left alone," he said as he stumbled to his feet and put his hand in hers.

"No, I do not," she said.

"You and Stargarde are as much alike as a pair of twin doves," he grumbled as he moved slowly along beside her.

Stanton, returning home half an hour later, stopped short in the hall, struck by the long unheard sound of music in the drawing room.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee," came welling on a soft sweet volume of song through the house.

He drew back the *portière*. Valentine stood leaning on the piano, his face calm and peaceful, his unseeing eyes in their glasses turned toward Vivienne, who sat with downcast eyelids playing for him.

At the close of the song Armour entered the room. "Is it you, old man?" asked the singer. "Your pretty bird lured me here. Don't be jealous of me," he continued childishly, and feeling his way toward the place where Armour stood with features painfully composed. "I'm tired of women —except as sisters," he added with an apologetic gesture in Vivienne's direction.

"Let there be no talk of jealousy," said Armour, laying his hand affectionately on Valentine's shoulder. "You and Vivienne will henceforth be brother and sister."

CHAPTER XXXVII

ADIEU TO FRISPI

ZILLA CAMPERDOWN was strutting up and down Hollis Street after the fashion of a small peacock airing itself. Back and forth she went, now in front of the shops, now passing hotels where gentlemen smoking and lounging stared curiously at the well-plumaged little creature in her white and black garments.

She was doing wrong to be parading the streets alone, that she very well knew, but she was enjoying herself so hugely that she made no haste to go home, and continued to complacently spread the tail of her little white dress while sunning herself in the glances of admiration bestowed upon her dark, *piquante* face.

Her only fear was that her adopted brother might suddenly come upon her. If he did she knew that she would receive a sharp scolding and would probably be sent to bed, but willing to snatch the present moment she did not allow this to interfere with her enjoyment. A strict rule with regard to her was that she must never set foot in the street alone. Her idle, dissolute father still haunted the

streets of Halifax, and although he was too wise to attempt any interference with her, knowing that he might stop the supplies of food and clothing that he received from Camperdown, he often lurked about waiting for a chance to hold some conversation with her. Hence the order that she should always be accompanied during her walks abroad.

The child's punishment came swiftly upon her. Sauntering up the hill from Water Street with his monkey on his shoulder and a troop of children at his heels, Gilberto Frispi suddenly appeared and came face to face with his daughter.

"Ah, little bird," he ejaculated in Italian *patois*, while the monkey screamed and chattered in delight and clutched its tiny hands toward Zilla's lace hat; "is it thou at last? I have longed to see thee, but thou art not allowed to fly far from thy nest."

Scarcely knowing what she did the girl turned and walked back toward the hotels. Her mortification was intense, and if a glance could have killed the smiling Frispi he would have fallen dead by the side of the daughter whom he presumed to address. She was exasperated too, almost beyond endurance, at the children who were hooting and shrieking with delight at the acrobatic feats of the monkey on Frispi's shoulder.

"Send them away," she exclaimed, stopping short.

"Scatta, my children," said Frispi in English, "go roun' de corna. I come lata."

"With your organ?" inquired his expectant youthful followers, to whom an Italian with a monkey and minus an organ partook of the nature of a phenomenon.

"Yes, yes. I got organ," said the man mendaciously. "Five, six organ. I bring. Go 'long."

They looked at him as trustingly as if they expected to find musical instruments issuing from his pockets, then went to peep around the corner and listen surreptitiously to the conversation between him and his elegant companion.

"What do you wish?" asked Zilla sharply.

"Oh ze beauty clothes!" exclaimed Frispi spreading his hands over her in delight. Then relapsing into Italian he told her in eager tones of his longing to have her with him. "Could she not leave her fine friends and run away with him?"

"Hold thy tongue," said Zilla scornfully interrupting him. "I wish no more of thee. Thou must leave this town."

"No, no, my loved one, not till thou canst go."

"Thou shalt go alone—at once, never to return," she said, hissing the words through her pointed white teeth that looked as if they might bite him. "I hate thee and thy poverty; and art thou not a thief?"

"Si, si," he said blandly; "and thou also?"

"Thou art worse," she said furiously, but in a low tone, for she was desperately aware that she was being surveyed curiously not only by the children, but also by some of the gentlemen in the hotel windows.

"I am thy father," said the man with a flash of anger, for he rarely relapsed into a passion unless he had been drinking.

"Who stabbed Constante?" breathed the girl. "Ah, thou startest! I did not always sleep when thou entertainedst thy friends. And if thou dost not leave here, I write at once to the Mafia and thou wilt be declared infamous. A cross will be drawn on thy door," and she made gestures with her hands signifying the choking of a person.

The man's olive skin turned to a greenish pallor and he kept his small black eyes fixed pleadingly on her face. "Surely thou wouldst not do that, my daughter. The Mafia is implacable and the companions would consider me a traitor and put me to sleep for what was a mistake. It was not in my heart to kill Constante."

"Thou hast soft shoes; thou canst walk backward," said Zilla inexorably. "By sundown if thou art here I write to Guglielmo Barzoni, and thou art doomed."

"Enough," replied the man with a gesture of resignation. "Thou art thy mother's child. Thou canst do all and more than thou promisest. Thou

wilt never see me more," and with no other sign of emotion beyond his unusual pallor, he noiselessly left her and in polite broken English postponed his engagement with the children until the next day, at which time they would return and wait anxiously for the man whose shadow would fall no more on the streets of Halifax.

Zilla began to tremble as soon as he left her. The interview with him had been a terrible strain on her, yet she courageously tried to make her way home. At the street corner she paused and leaned against a house. One of the gentlemen at the window seeing this, left his station there and came slowly sauntering up to her.

"Good-morning," he said kindly. "Do you remember me?"

"Yes; you are Mr. Patrick Macartney's brother," she said, "and I am Dr. Camperdown's little girl, and that bad beggar-man frightened me."

"Will you come into the hotel and rest?" he asked, noting in some anxiety that her two small feet were braced against the pavement to keep her from falling.

She drew herself up suspiciously: "No, thank you."

"There is a ladies' entrance," he said, pulling severely at his moustache.

"I am going to see my brother," she said loftily, and leaving him without a word she, by a severe

effort, managed to walk as far as the door having on it the brass plate, "Dr. Camperdown, Surgeon." Arrived there, she tottered inside and seated herself on the lowest step of the staircase, while Captain Macartney, passing by the open doorway, knew that she would be safe now, and went on his way muttering thoughtfully, "Poor child!"

After she had rested sufficiently Zilla, with lips firmly compressed, climbed the steps to the waiting room and seated herself among her adopted brother's patients.

The next time Camperdown opened the door he saw her and called her into the inner room. "Now, birdling, what is it? Be quick, for I am rushed this morning. What's the matter with your cheeks? Have you seen a ghost?"

"I have done a bad thing," said the little girl deliberately.

"Indeed! An unusual confession for you. I thought that you and the pope had the infallibility of the world between you. Out with it."

"I have told my father to leave Halifax."

"H'm—well, yes, that was bad—for you. What was the occasion of it?" and by means of questions he drew from her an account of her meeting with Frispi after she had run away from Mrs. Trotley, who had gone shopping with her."

"What do you know about the Mafia, Zilla?"

With a reluctance that she would not have dis-

played three months earlier in her career, Zilla gave a child's account of low brigandage according to her observation of her father and his associates.

"Stop," said Camperdown at last, when she was describing the disarticulation of the fingers of the "*picciotti*" so that they might be more expert at stealing, "never mention this again, Zilla. Don't let a living soul know that you were familiar with such iniquities. The Lord in his mercy has delivered you from them. Now, what do you want me to do about your father?"

The child hung her head. "Tell him to stay, for I do not wish Stargarde to know that I would do so bad a thing. Tears will come in her eyes and she will say: 'Your father is all that you have; do not send him away as a dog'."

Camperdown's thoughts ran back to the day when he had acquainted Zilla with her relationship to Stargarde. The child's passion of astonishment and joy when she found that she was connected with a woman whom she not only loved and admired, but who was the acme of respectability to her, had not seemed to decrease as time went by. She still loved him more intensely perhaps, but Stargarde was her pride and delight, her own blood relation, and the person in the world for whom she had the most reverence.

"Run home and tell her all about it," said Camperdown softly. "In the meantime I will look

up Frispi," and patting Zilla's relieved face, he sent her away.

"Ha, sir, were you addressing me?" said his next patient fiercely, as he hobbled into the room.

Camperdown stared blankly at a choleric old gentleman. "No—was talking aloud as I have a habit of doing. What was I saying?"

"'Low, stealthy brute,' sir, you said, 'and a constant worry to me.'"

Camperdown threw back his head and laughed heartily. "I crave your pardon. I was thinking of a pensioner of my wife's—a miserable foreigner that I hope has been frightened from the town."

Long after his usual lunch time Camperdown arrived home to find Stargarde and Zilla waiting for him—the latter hanging about her half-sister with red eyes and glances of suppressed adoration.

"Have been all over the town," said Camperdown; "there's no trace of Frispi to be had. He went to his lodging, gathered up his few belongings, and left. The police are on his track——"

"He will not be found," said Zilla quietly and despairingly. "He knows how to run away."

"I propose," said Camperdown, seating himself at the table, "to have something to eat now. Subsequently, to take my wife and Zilla and Mrs. Trotley for a drive to Cow Bay. Don't carry your bathing suit, Zilla; it's too late in the day for a plunge in the breakers. We'll have a run over the

sands. Then I propose two weeks hence to take my wife and Zilla vagabondizing—that is, in the earliest sense of the word. We'll stroll about this continent and see if we can't pick up some trace of the runaway——"

He was interrupted by Zilla, who precipitated herself into his arms.

"A little girl with a sleeping conscience is rather a ticklish possession, isn't she?" he said, addressing his smiling wife over Zilla's bent head. "A little girl with an awakened conscience is something very precious and must be treated with very great care."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE GHOST FLOWER

"ME no diggum up," said Joe decidedly.

He stood knee deep in pale green ferns growing among heavy shadows formed by the interlaced branches of trees overhead, his eyes fixed on a group of etherially white flowers springing up from the richest of leaf mould on a mossy bank at a little distance from him.

Vivienne knelt by the wax-like cluster of flower interrogation points in speechless delight, while Armour stood above her saying in quiet amusement, "Why don't you dig it up, Joe?"

"Callum ghos' flower," said Joe doggedly; "spirits angry when touchum. Come 'way, Miss Debbiline."

His voice was really concerned, but Vivienne looked at him with a gay laugh and continued to touch with caressing finger tips the beautiful, unearthly flower, which was furnished with colorless bracts in place of green leaves.

"If I were to wear a few of these to the 'drawing room' my decoration would be unique, would it not?" she said to Armour.

"Decidedly unique," he said. "Have you ever heard any poetry about this curious flower?"

"No, never."

"Then let me repeat to you some exquisite lines by a Canadian poet, impressed by observing that the stalks and blossoms form interrogation points. Remember that this determines the cast of the sonnet," and he recited with great taste:

"Like Israel's seer I come from out the earth,
Confronting with the question air and sky,
Why dost thou bring me up? White ghost am I
Of that which was God's beauty at its birth.
In eld the sun kissed me to ruby red,
I held my chalice up to heaven's full view,
The August stars dropped down their golden dew,
The skyey balms exhaled about my bed.
Alas, I loved the darkness, not the light;
The deadly shadows, not the bending blue,
Spoke to my trancëd heart, made false seem true,
And drowned my spirit in the deeps of night.
O Painter of the flowers, O God, most sweet,
Dost say my spirit for the light is meet?"

"Alas, the poor flower!" said Vivienne. "Like some mortals it loved the darkness rather than the light. And yet how touching the final question."

"Yes," said Armour quietly, "a regret has been born even among 'the deadly shadows.'"

"Will you not repeat to me some more of those things that you repeat so well?" asked Vivienne demurely.

Bareheaded and standing with his back against a tree, Armour murmured to her the praises of another fairy glen in far-distant Wales, a place peopled with shy winds,

> "Whose fitful plumes waft dewy balm
> From all the wildwood, and let fall
> An incommunicable calm."

Then dropping on his knees on the ground he said, "Give me your clasp knife, Joe."

"Me no give you big knife," said the superstitious Christmas; "me 'fraid for Miss Debbiline. Spirits killum if touch ghos' flower," and he retreated farther among the ferns.

Armour laughed as he bent his light head over the flower that he was about to wrest from its home among the "sweet wood's golden glooms."

"Do you think it will grow if we plant it in the greenhouse?" asked Vivienne, as she watched her lover carefully insinuating a sharp-pointed stone among the decayed leaves of many seasons.

"I scarcely think so, but we can try it," and Armour carefully carrying the fragile ghost flower in his handkerchief walked by her side down the woodland path to the shore of a tiny cove where Joe's canoe lay drawn up on the grass.

"Where is that Indian?" he said, looking about him when after the lapse of a few minutes Joe did not appear. "He is as subtle as a snake."

"One can't expect obedience from a Micmac," observed Vivienne gently.

"No; he hates coercion, and too many orders would drive him from us. I don't suppose there is another Micmac in Nova Scotia who serves white people as he serves us. It is phenomenal to get anything from them beyond assistance in hunting. We had better go on. He is evidently afraid to venture in the canoe with this flower. Ah, there he is. Joe, aren't you coming?"

The Indian was lazily drawing his long legs over the pebbly beach. "No; me stay."

"Surely you are not afraid of this," said Armour, teasingly holding up the ghost flower.

"Me no 'fraid for Joe. Me 'fraid spirits makeum Miss Debbiline bad luck."

"Say a prayer to keep the trouble away. You are a good Catholic."

"Wirgin no hearum. She angry when spirits angry."

"You have your new religion mixed with old superstitions, Joe," said Mr. Armour as he assisted Vivienne into the canoe and placed himself in the stern. "I'll send Jerry back for you," and he pushed out from the shore.

While they were crossing the Arm, Armour looked thoughtfully from the flowers at his feet across to the Pinewood beach where Mrs. Colonibel was walking up and down in the warm sunlight.

"Suppose the Indian is right," he said jestingly, "what new calamity do you suppose is overshadowing us?"

"The postponement of our marriage."

"No, Vivienne; this day fortnight we shall be away from here."

"Ah, yes; do not let us think of the contrary," she said wistfully. Then wishing to change the subject she continued, "Flora seems quiet and *distraite* lately."

"She is ashamed of herself. I think that she is going to be a better woman in the future."

"She does not seem unhappy," said Vivienne thoughtfully.

"No, nor does she make you unhappy; if she did——"

"You would forgive her," said Vivienne quickly. "How fortunate for Valentine that she will be here while we are away; and she must not leave when we come back."

"She will not; you need not fear. She is too comfortable here, and while she is agreeable to you she may stay."

"Why are you so kind to me?" asked Vivienne with a sudden accession of mischief.

He looked steadily at her. "There has been a good deal of mutual kindness between maids and men since the world began. It is the natural thing."

"And when one grows old," pursued the girl, "how is it then? Do old people love each other?"

"Sometimes, not always."

"Often, very often they do, misguided man," she said warmly. "Love does not end with youth. When I am old and feeble, and sitting helpless in my chair, you will still call me 'darling' and will wrap me in shawls and bring me cups of tea."

"If I am able to get about," he said with a comical grimace. "Remember that I am the elder."

The girl was sitting cross-legged in the canoe, the tips of her shoes just peeping from beneath her white gown. At his words she laid a hand on her side, leaned back, and burst into gay and spontaneous laughter.

"I forgot," she said; "you will be in the chair. It will be I who must serve you and call you my dearest of old men. I will do it, Stanton," demurely sobering herself; "and when you wish to hobble to and fro I will offer you my shoulder to lean upon."

"Thank you; I have no doubt but that we shall be an amiable pair."

"It seems strange, does it not?" said Vivienne wonderingly, "to think of the time of old age. We are both young and strong now, yet the day will come when we must give place to others. I think that I shall enjoy being an old lady, Stanton, your old lady, not another man's."

He opened his mouth to answer her, then closed it again and began paddling more vigorously, for on lifting up his eyes he had seen his father standing beside Mrs. Colonibel and watching them. He could no longer enjoy Vivienne's girlish chatter, and in silence steered toward the landing place.

The girl too saw her prospective father-in-law and slightly shivered. His affectionately familiar manner since her engagement was not pleasing to her, and she avoided all intercourse with him beyond that which was strictly necessary.

"I must become sober," she said, "in preparation for this evening. It is a very solemn affair that we are to attend, is it not?"

"Not solemn, but a trifle ceremonious. You do not dread it, do you?"

"A little. You know that I have not cared to appear in public since my unhappy experience the night of your ball."

"I know, but we are rarely honored by the presence of our governor-general, and I thought the opportunity of being presented too valuable a one to lose. However, if you do not care to go, we shall stay at home."

"I wish to go, Stanton."

"And remember, your father will soon be reinstated in public opinion. MacDaly sticks to it that he accidentally burnt the warehouse, though he will tell me nothing more. As soon as I work up this

latest clue to your father's whereabouts I shall make public MacDaly's confession and state that I have good reason to believe that your father is guiltless of the other charge against him."

"But will you be believed, Stanton?"

"I think so."

"You are so much respected," she said, "every one will trust you, though you have no positive proof."

"Yet I wish I had it, Vivienne."

"You sigh," she returned, "and yet you are not unhappy, are you?"

"Unhappy? No; I was never so near happiness in my life."

"Near it and not quite there," she responded, as they glided into the shadow of the boat-house.

She it was who usually did the talking when they were together. Armour had a way of listening to her and looking unutterable things. Just now he took her hand and held it a minute in silence.

"Just think that thought aloud," she said curiously.

He seemed to be overcoming some scruple to voice his emotion, then he said in a choking voice: "I may be foolish, but there is a horrible suspicion upon me that we are at a crisis in our affairs. I may have to give you up. If I do—if I do, Vivienne, it will kill me as surely as if——"

"Stop, stop," she said, playfully putting her hands up to her ears. "I will not hear such tragic nonsense. Who is there that would come between us?"

"Your father."

"Then he will be no father of mine." And proudly tossing her dark head, she sprang from the canoe and ran away from him to hide her tearful eyes.

A few hours later Judy Colonibel was tiptoeing about a group of three people who stood with more or less agitated faces in the Pinewood drawing room. They had not yet become fully accustomed to Valentine's blindness, and upon this, the first occasion of leaving him to go to one of the scenes of festivity in which he had formerly taken so much pleasure, two at least of the group of three felt their hearts wrung with compassion.

His face, however, was perfectly calm as he sat astride a chair listening to Judy's description of their appearance.

"They are all in white, Valentine," she said enthusiastically, "and they look, as MacDaly says, 'deliciously delicate and palatably perfect.' What are you saying? That you think it must be rather trying to Stanton? Foolish boy, he has on his usual evening clothes. Mamma's dress is satin, Vivienne's silk, and they both have little white plumes in their hair—mamma three with lace, and Vivienne two

with a veil. Why, Flora Colonibel, where are your diamonds? You ought to be in a blaze, to-night."

A painful color overspread Mrs. Colonibel's face.

"Flora," said Armour, "go and put on your jewels. I insist." And his eyes followed her in satisfaction as she slowly left the room.

"And our dear blackbird wears her pearls," continued Judy, squeezing Vivienne's hand, "a beautiful string that I fancy a man soon to become a relation by marriage has given her, and——"

"Has she no flowers?" inquired Valentine with animation.

"My ghost flowers!" exclaimed Vivienne. "Where are they?"

"I was hoping that you would forget them," said Armour with a laugh.

"Have you too become superstitious?" asked Vivienne. "What did you do with the plant?"

"I sent it to the cellar to be kept cool. I will ring for it."

"Here is the carriage," said Judy skipping to the window; "and here comes Uncle Colonel. Let me put on your cloak, Vivienne. Good-bye, Miss Polar Bear from the frozen North, you are all white and glittering. Take good care of her and mamma, Stanton. Valentine and I are going to have a good time practising."

It was a very gay and excited city that the Pinewood party drove through on their way to the Pro-

vincial building. Nowhere is there a more loyal province than Nova Scotia. Any representative of her majesty is duly honored, but on this occasion the citizens had risen with one accord to welcome a man who was popular among them not only on account of his social position, but because he had shown himself to be a true and wise friend to the Nova Scotian people.

Therefore houses were illuminated, decorations were displayed, and troops of citizens and country visitors paraded the streets, or sat at the windows awaiting the arrival of a torchlight procession that was escorting the vice-regal party about the city.

On nearing the Provincial building the Armours' carriage was obliged to move more slowly on account of the dense throng of sightseers, and upon a sign from a policeman the coachman drew up his horses and they came to a standstill.

Lusty cheering and a salute from a guard of honor explained the cause of the delay to the occupants of the carriage. Their excellencies were arriving, and Mrs. Colonibel, who had participated in several functions of the kind before, drew back to allow Vivienne to see the striking effect of the entrance into the old stone building of the representative of royalty, his wife, and his suite, and their reception by the premier of the province and the members of the government.

As soon as there was a passage made through

the crowd, Armour preceded the two ladies up the crimson-decorated stairway to the dressing rooms. Very soon they were with him and Colonel Armour again, and as they stood waiting for the line of people before them to pass on, Armour whispered to Vivienne, "You are not nervous, are you?"

"No, not very," she replied smilingly.

"Keep behind Flora, and do as she does. The first *aide-de-camp* will pass up your card."

Vivienne had a dazzling impression of a lofty apartment hung with large oil paintings and having groups of plants and masses of flowers here and there, a number of officers in brilliant uniform on her left hand, and on the other a flock of snowy dames and gentlemen in sombre garments who had already been presented.

Immediately before her was the attraction for all eyes in the room—a dais on which the central figures were a dark, vivacious man in the court uniform of an imperial councillor, and a bejeweled woman, who was smiling and bowing her gracious head not alone with precision and accuracy, but with a quickness of intelligence and apprehension that caught the individual characteristics of each person that passed before her.

Lord Vaulabel, when he heard the clear, distinct enunciation of Vivienne's name, turned ever so slightly toward the lieutenant-governor who supported him on his right hand. There was an

almost imperceptible smile and a glance of intelligence which Vivienne did not perceive while making graceful courtesies before the dais.

Drawing a breath of relief she took her station beside her chaperon and watched other people going through the ceremony of presentation.

"There are some handsome gowns here this evening," murmured Mrs. Colonibel to Vivienne.

"And handsome women," responded the girl, surveying in approbation some of her clear-skinned, finely proportioned countrywomen; "we are so much out of doors—women here take so much exercise—their appearance of perfect health is owing to that, do you not think so?"

"I suppose so," said her companion absently. "What a delicious bow the consul's daughter makes, and her gown is a dream. I am so glad that she is to be one of your bridesmaids. Do look at old Daddy Fayley pulling his forelock at his excellency. This is an *omnium gatherum*," and the lady looked about her a trifle disdainfully.

"A new country has not the polish of an old one, Flora," said Vivienne; "it would be unnatural if it had, and Lord and Lady Vaulabel do not expect it.

"There is Uncle Colonel," said Mrs. Colonibel; "I thought he came in with us."

"He stopped to speak to some one," said Vivienne; and her eyes followed Colonel Armour with

painful interest as he entered the room, remarked by all on account of his handsome, courtly appearance and the indomitable youthfulness of his old age. When he paused to bow with inimitable grace and respect before Lord and Lady Vaulabel they observed him attentively, and Vivienne noticed their glances subsequently wandering to him.

"A glorious devil," quoted a gentleman behind Vivienne, who was staring at Colonel Armour and keeping up a series of remarks unheard by any one but the friend into whose ears they were confided; "large in heart and brain," he went on, "that did love beauty only."

"Devil indeed," murmured the other; "no saint would live on as he does. He's outlasted all his generation. He reminds me of an old rat in one of my father's vessels plying between here and Boston. Nothing would kill him, not even a change of cargo to tar paper and paraffin oil, which knocked off all the others. This old fellow wouldn't give in and never would be caught, till one day a sailor found him behind a box in the forecastle, his head nodding till finally he fell over dead."

"No such luck with Holy Jim," said the other with a suppressed laugh. "He's good for twenty years yet. Have you heard his latest?" and he began to retail a morsel of savory scandal.

Sometime after midnight the last presentation was made; Lord and Lady Vaulabel were escorted

to the ballroom, and the official quadrille was formed. A little later, when some members of the vice-regal party had seated themselves in a number of high-backed chairs provided for them, Lord Vaulabel with one of his quick, eager gestures that made him seem more like a French than an English nobleman, bent over his wife and said in a low voice, "Winifred, you will not forget?"

She smiled at him. "No, I will not." Then as he left her she turned and spoke to the lieutenant-governor, who immediately started on what seemed to be an aimless wandering about the ballroom and the adjoining corridor. Presently he came upon the person that he was seeking, as she stood with upturned face looking at the paintings in the legislative chamber.

"Mr. Armour," he said politely to her companion, "will you surrender Miss Delavigne to my charge for a while? Lady Vaulabel expresses a wish to see her."

Very willingly Mr. Armour saw his *fiancée* led away and sauntered closely enough behind her to see her raise her dark eyes in reverence to the face of one of the most distinguished women in the British Empire.

Lady Vaulabel would not permit a second courtesy, and taking the girl's hand seated her beside her own chair. Charmed with her sweetness, her kindness, her unmistakable air of distinction,

and the affability of her manner, Vivienne gazed at her in admiration and in pleased surprise at the honor conferred upon her, an honor presently explained by a few words from Lady Vaulabel.

"Your ancestors were the Delavignes of Orléans, were they not?" she asked.

"Yes, your excellency, they were."

"His excellency wishes to speak to you of them. Possibly you may have heard some tradition of a relation once existing between the two families—that of my husband and the Delavignes?"

"No, your excellency, I have not; but I know that the earls of Vaulabel are of French origin."

Lady Vaulabel smiled graciously and was about to make some further observations when she was interrupted by a plaintive ejaculation that made her raise her eyes quickly.

"Madeleine, Madeleine," the voice was murmuring; "Madeleine, my beloved."

The sentimental tones issued from the mouth of an old gentleman who had an air of being one of the fathers of the town—a father who had evidently not been confining himself to the ice cream and cooling drinks served before the supper, but had been indulging in something stronger.

"Madeleine, will you not come with me?" and the foolish old figure straightened itself. "Delavigne is dead. I have seen his ghost, and it had white hair. Now you can marry me."

What nonsense was Colonel Armour talking? Vivienne looked in deep mortification at Lady Vaulabel, who had laid a detaining hand on her arm. Her excellency's glance also detained two watchful military *aides-de-camp*, who at a sign from her would have thrust each an arm through those of the senile disturber of her conversation and walked him away. She had recognized the foolish old man. It was Colonel Armour, who was suffering from a state of collapse, both mental and physical, and horribly changed from the gallant old man who had been presented to her earlier in the evening.

"Your excellency," murmured Vivienne, "Colonel Armour is a very old man, and lately he has been subject to strange lapses of memory. He will recover himself presently."

The words had scarcely left her lips when the bent figure raised itself, and a voice rang like a trumpet through the ballroom:

"Delavigne is a milksop and a fool!"

A kind of petrefaction seized the large assembly. Every one stood still. The dancers about to take their places paused in astonishment, and the amazed orchestra held in embarrassment their voiceless instruments.

A black-coated waiter went gliding like a snake through the motionless groups. It was MacDaly who had managed by a stroke of diplomacy to

have himself engaged as one of the servants for the evening. He had reveled in the splendor of the scene about him, and had gurgled frequently in delight as he withdrew corks from bottles or ladled ice cream from freezers, "This is auriferous; this is golden."

Now he saw a chance to distinguish himself; now he would strike a blow for the honor and glory of MacDaly.

"Your most serene and exalted magnificence," he cried in a shrill voice, which extended to the farthest corner of the crowded room, as he dropped on one knee before Lord Vaulabel, who had placed himself beside his wife, "the notorious gentleman known as Colonel Armour speaks the truth, for of a verity the man called Delavigne was by him befooled and gulled and ruined, and 'tis I, Derrick Edward Fitz-James O'Grady MacDaly, once humble corporal in the regiment commanded by your late most glorious and regretted parent, the right honorable the Earl of Vaulabel, that can prove—"

Greatly to MacDaly's surprise he was obliged to rattle off the latter part of his speech on the way back to the tea room, whither he was guided by sundry constraining hands laid upon his shoulders.

Colonel Armour's eyes followed him in bewilderment; then suddenly he drew himself up, looked about the room, and ejaculated sharply: "What have I been saying?"

No one answered him. But he caught curious glances from staring faces, wonder and incredulity from some, aversion and formless suspicion taking shape from others. He was a ruined man; he saw it, felt it. His day was over. His jaw shook; his whole frame trembled. He had said something that had put him outside the pale of honorable society and had crystallized the brilliant, glittering throng into wondering astonishment.

One parting, sweeping look he gave about the room, his eyes coming finally to Vivienne, who stood among the honored guests of the evening. The Delavignes had triumphed. His head dropped on his breast; he shuffled from the place disgraced, ruined, and undone.

One step followed him, one firm, manly step echoing down the wide stone hall. Stanton had quietly committed the half-fainting Mrs. Colonibel to the care of some friends and was on his way to overtake the lonely old figure hurrying from the building.

CHAPTER XXXIX

AT LAST

LORD and Lady Vaulabel withdrew early from the ball that evening, and accompanying them to Government House went a very white and unnaturally composed girl. Upon reaching their own apartments, the two distinguished people sat down near the young girl, whom they were treating with a kind and exquisite consideration, which at the same time consoled and surprised her in her perturbed state of mind.

Their first endeavor was to draw her thoughts away from her unhappy lover, whose pale set face they knew was haunting her.

"Lady Vaulabel tells me," began his excellency, "that she was about to explain to you the mutual obligations that the founders of our respective families were able to render to each other."

"Yes, your excellency, she was."

"I will explain to you the way in which it came about," said Lord Vaulabel with a lightness of manner that would seem to belong rather to the early time of the morning than to the late hours of

a fatiguing day. "In 1515, at the battle of Marignan, Roland de la Vaulabelle went to the assistance of a young foot-soldier, the son of a merchant of Orléans, who was grievously wounded and was trying to escape, and rescued him at the risk of his own life. For this and other deeds of valor he was made chevalier after the battle had been renewed and won the following day."

Lord Vaulabel paused, and Vivienne murmured with pale lips that she remembered reading of the battle in the history of France.

"Then you know all about the court of Francis I.," pursued Lord Vaulabel, "the *roi des gentilshommes*, who spent the money of his subjects with a free hand. De la Vaulabelle shared in the extravagance of the court, and when King Francis, after his sojourn in Italy, became impressed by the marvels of the *Renaissance*, de la Vaulabelle took part in his admiration and ordered some of the Italian architects who had followed the king to France to build him a *château* in the new style of architecture. To do this he was obliged to raise a loan, and applied to the elder Delavigne, who had been full of gratitude for his rescue of his son. Delavigne advanced him the money, the *château* was built, and for more than one hundred years, until Guillaume Delavigne came out to assist in founding Montreal, there was much kindness between the two families. The Dalavignes continued to lend

money to the de la Vaulabelles, and the de la Vaulabelles continued to be powerful friends to the Delavignes, protecting them from the rapacity of some of the *noblesse*, who might have oppressed them."

There was a short pause. Vivienne had taken in the meaning of his words, but found herself unable to make any remark. Lord Vaulabel flashed a quick glance at his wife, as if he were seeking advice.

With a sweet warning smile, Lady Vaulabel slightly shook her head and looked at the girl's pallid face.

"Miss Delavigne," said his excellency kindly, "the Vaulabels do not forget. I often linger over the romantic records of the days of old ; the chivalrous feats of the men of my family I do not consider any more self-sacrificing than the patient help that the Delavignes often gave them at great inconvenience to themselves. You will therefore understand my motive when I say that I should be very glad to do something for you—to relieve any anxiety that you may have."

"Your excellency," said Vivienne, clasping her gloved hands nervously, yet speaking with unexpected firmness, "I do not know where my father is—it has seemed almost a sacrilege, in view of my approaching marriage, yet we cannot find him. I have a thought now that he may be in France. In

view of what has passed this evening, you can understand my unhappiness—my distress——"

The girl was suffering intensely. Lady Vaulabel's thoughts ran away to Ottawa, to a baby girl in a cradle there. Some day her child too would have a woman's heart. Her lips slightly moved, and her husband caught the words, "Tell her."

"Miss Delavigne," he said with utmost gentleness, "I can give you some news with regard to your father; but," he added, a little startled by the sudden change in her, "you must compose yourself."

Her breast rose and fell convulsively, she cast down her eyes, then said falteringly: "I beg your excellency's pardon. You may tell me anything now."

Lord Vaulabel sprang up with a nervous gesture and paced the carpet. "It was a long time ago," he said with assumed lightness, "nearly twenty years—I was a lad traveling through Canada with my father. We were on our way west on a hunting expedition. Boylike, I restlessly wandered through the train that we were on, delighted by the freedom from constraint in railway traveling to which I had not been accustomed in our English carriages. We were on our way to Quebec, when my attention was attracted by the unhappy, dazed appearance of a young Frenchman, who remained always in one attitude. I told my father about

him, and he questioned the guard, or conductor, as one calls that official here. We approached the man—found that his name was Delavigne. I think, Miss Delavigne, that you promised to be very calm," he said, interrupting himself and gazing in pretended quiet amusement at his listener.

His excellency however was not amused, he was intensely interested and anxious.

Vivienne had fallen on her knees, and was sobbing over Lady Vaulabel's hand. "You know all —oh, tell me more! May God bless you for your kindness to my father."

His excellency looked at the kneeling girl, a suspicious moisture in his eyes—the heart of a ruler is very much as the heart of another man—then lightly turning he left the room.

"Compose yourself, my poor child," murmured Lady Vaulabel, "your father is with us. He has been one of my husband's secretaries for years."

"*Mon cher Delavigne*, how often have I told thee not to write till this hour," said Lord Vaulabel in French, as he entered a small adjoining room, where a slender man with patient dark eyes, white hands, and a head of thick, snowy hair, sat with all the paraphernalia of a secretary about him.

The secretary pushed back his folding desk, and rose respectfully. "I could not sleep, your excellency—not if I were in bed. Not in this town," and he looked expectantly at his patron.

"Yes, I have seen her," said Lord Vaulabel, as if answering a question. "She is beautiful and good, and she believes in her father."

"*Dieu est tout miséricorde et tout sagesse*," and the man reverently bent his head as he thus spoke of the divine compassion and wisdom. He had suffered too long to be given to much outward emotion.

"Some strange revelations have been made to us," pursued Lord Vaulabel; "but you will learn all from your daughter."

"Is she here?" asked Delavigne quietly.

"Yes," and with a face more excited than that of his secretary the nobleman led the way to the drawing room.

He threw open the door. Delavigne looked in, saw rising up before him with glad arms extended a girl even more lovely than the wife of his youth. He heard her eager cry, "My father!" made a step forward and caught her to his breast, while Lord and Lady Vaulabel softly withdrew from the room.

CHAPTER XL

THE FATE THAT PURSUES US

JOE CHRISTMAS was an unhappy Indian after the discovery of the ghost flower across the Arm.

He gazed mournfully toward the big house, shook his head, and uttered a number of times a long-drawn, musical "Ah-a-a-a," of regret and dismay. Then as if he were forced to it by some power he could not resist, he gave most touching proof of his affection and respect for Vivienne.

He waited until he had seen her leave the house with the ill-omened flowers in her hand, then he launched his canoe on the smooth, dark waters of the Arm, and went through the blackness and softness of the August night to the tiny cove that he had visited with Vivienne and Armour through the day.

Upon arriving there he drew his canoe from the water, put his cap under his arm, dropped on the ground, and took out his beads. Over and over his prayers he went—it was not terrifying to pray with the grass under his knees and the stars overhead, but when it came to entering the spirit-

haunted wood his heart misgave him. Yet he persevered, hobbling over the ground till he was under the trees and among the ferns, and finally beside the gaping rent in the leaf mould left by the abstraction of the ghost flower.

Shuddering in every limb, and beseeching the Virgin, the Saints, and the Great Spirit not to avenge the theft, he detached the cross from his rosary and dropped it into the hole as an offering to the offended spirit of the plant. Then springing to his feet he ran from out the dreadful shadows, leaped into his canoe, and paddled quickly and in a relieved manner, not to his camp among the spruces, but back to Pinewood where he purposed remaining till Vivienne's return home should convince him that he had been successful in his effort to propitiate the spirits on her behalf.

He stationed himself among the pines in front of the house, occasionally leaving them to investigate the origin of sounds in other directions, but always coming back and waiting with the patience of a trained hunter.

Quite early in the evening two of the maids came home exchanging with accompanying admirers various confidences that he was privileged to hear. Subsequently the admirers went home, and the maids went to bed. He saw the lights extinguished in their rooms, and traced Mammy Juniper as she wandered from window to window,

with a candle in her hand. At one o'clock a sound south of the house drew him to the road beyond Pinewood.

Mr. Armour was bringing home his father, not in their own carriage, but in a cab. With a stolid face, and much inward bewilderment, Joe saw the shrinking old figure assisted through the gate in the wall, and put in the cottage.

"Ole man gone crazy," he muttered, an opinion which was confirmed when he descended to the cottage half an hour later and saw his master sitting at a table playing like a baby with an empty wineglass and some teaspoons, and Dr. Camperdown, Mr. Armour, and Mammy Juniper looking at him with facial expressions hard to describe.

A little later the two gentlemen ascended to the house, where Camperdown left Mr. Armour and drove back to the town.

At two o'clock Joe, standing opposite the windows of the library, was keenly watching Mr. Armour, who was quietly pacing up and down the room.

There was something wrong. Mr. Armour's face was too white and stern for an ordinary occasion, and where was Miss Debbiline? Joe was uneasy, yet true to his natural instincts he waited on, for he would not ask questions so long as he hoped to gain the information he wished by ocular demonstration.

Three o'clock came, and Joe was just about creeping to the library window to address Mr. Armour, when his practised ear told him that two carriages were coming down the avenue. He drew behind a tree trunk and watched until he saw the cabs stop before the door, and five people leaving them and entering the house.

Ah! here at last was his worshiped Miss Debbiline, safe and well, her eyes only a trifle heavy from her night's dissipation. The spirits had spared her, and he could now go happily to his camp, but first he would take a final view of what was transpiring in the library, for to that room would Miss Debbiline probably repair.

The delicate rose curtains waving to and fro in the night wind afforded him a sufficient screen, and bending his supple body he lingered on, observing what appeared even to his untutored mind to be a succession of strange and unusual scenes.

Away at the other end of the room, with his back against the bookshelves, stood Mr. Armour, rigid and motionless, his eyes glued to the face of the peaceful, white-haired stranger whom Dr. Camperdown was ushering into the room.

"Stanton, you know this man," Joe heard Dr. Camperdown say in a harsh, resonant voice—then his attention was distracted by a rustling near him.

Vivienne, with her finger on her lips, and holding up the train of her white dress, was gliding

like a fairy to his side. "I saw you from the window above, Joe," she murmured. "Let me stand beside you. Mr. Armour," with a catching of her breath, "will not allow me to enter the room, but I shall go in this way presently. Do not go," and she made a commanding gesture as the Indian was about to creep away, "I may want you."

"Me no stan' beside ghos' flower," said Joe, gazing at the darkened blossoms across her breast.

The agitated girl looked down at the flowers, whose dainty heads, as if weary of asking fruitless questions, had—unperceived by her—drooped and blackened till they were uncanny and repulsive in their appearance.

With something like a sob she caught them in her hand and threw them far away.

"Ghos' flower always turnum black," said Joe, "when pickum," then immensely flattered at being told to remain, he stepped a little nearer to her, and resumed his scrutiny of the room.

Mr. Armour had become disturbed. His face was no longer resolved and apathetic, but alternately became crimson and deathly pale, and his attention was still fixed on the undemonstrative gentleman with the white hair, then on Dr. Camperdown, who was hurling impetuous sentences at him.

"Suppose your fabric of respectability has fallen

down—rear another about yourself. No one blames you for this catastrophe. Can you not accept the assurance of this man who offers your family a pardon that is almost divine? Has he not suffered? Aye, more than you."

"I have been stunned," said Armour in a hollow, far-away voice. "I am going away."

"Coward!" exclaimed Camperdown with assumed anger. "Moral coward!"

Armour's face brightened. Instead of resenting the offensive epithet, he turned to his friend with a smile so humble, so touching, that Camperdown swung himself away, muttering discomposedly, "I can make nothing of this fellow."

Mr. Delavigne looked compassionately at Armour. "I should have known you anywhere," he said in a dreamy voice; "you are like the little lad whom I loved so much as he sat beside me at my desk, and yet you have changed. Your expression——"

"Yes," interrupted Camperdown furiously, "we all know why the boyish expression went. His father—that gibbering idiot down yonder—was the one to frighten it away. Tell us, Stanton, you suspected this bad business from the first."

"Only suspected," said Armour in a firm tone. "Had I known surely——"

"But you had no proofs—we all know that," interposed Camperdown; "and you," turning to Mr.

Delavigne, "why did you not put yourself in communication with Stanton through all these years?"

"Because of the unnaturalness and the uselessness of such a course," said Mr. Delavigne mildly.

"But he has been looking for you—has spent money. You might at least have told him that you were alive."

"I regret the expense; but my child—you forget her. I did not know that she longed for her father, yet I remembered her mother's nature. Had she had a hint of my existence a search might have been instituted. Better for her to think that I was dead than to link herself with one who would disgrace her. To you," and the elder man turned impulsively to Armour, "my intensely grateful acknowledgments are due for your care of my child. By the kindness of one of the most noble and admirable of men, I have been enabled to receive accounts of her safe-keeping; occasionally, with a heart wrung with thankfulness, to see her. Your vigilance, your loyalty, I knew I could trust; for this latter expression, this love for my beloved daughter, I was unprepared. I felt that I must hasten here, yet always with the feeling that the boy of my earlier recollections would not prove unworthy of the highest mark of my confidence. At the moment of finding my child I am willing to lose her again for her sake and yours."

While Mr. Delavigne was speaking Mr. Armour's

expression had again become one of insensibility to either pleasure or pain, and Camperdown closely observing him went to the door and sharply ejaculated: "I can make nothing of this Obstinacy the Second. I would give a thousand dollars if my wife had not chosen to go orphan-hunting in the country at this time." Then he turned on his heel and came back into the room. "What about Vivienne?"

"It would be a crime to link her life with my disgraced one," said Armour heavily. "She must forget me."

"Is she a girl to do that?"

"To forget is the privilege of youth," said Armour drearily. "You may fancy that I am doing a cruel thing; ten years hence Vivienne will be happily married to another man. You cannot tempt me," he said with sudden energy. "I have weighed the matter. The pang will be sharp and short for Vivienne——"

"And for you?" said Camperdown eagerly.

"For me—it does not matter. I am going away."

"Going to blow your brains out," muttered Camperdown. Then he exclaimed with increased energy: "Think of your God, your country, your promised wife. You have been living for the good opinion of your fellow-men. Your god Respectability is a poor, rotten thing."

"Stanton!" exclaimed a voice from the doorway.

They all looked in that direction and saw Mrs. Colonibel, white and haggard. "What is this I hear?" she went on, advancing into the room. "Is your marriage broken off?"

"Yes," he returned shortly.

"This is your doing," she said affixing accusing eyes on Mr. Delavigne.

A smile passed over his calm face. "No, it is not; but all will be well yet, I hope."

Behind Mrs. Colonibel, and pushing her aside, came Judy. "What is all this fuss about?" she cried in a peevish way; "the house in commotion and everybody out of bed! Where is Vivienne, and who is that gentleman?"

"Judy," said her mother, turning sharply to her, "this is Vivienne's father."

"Her father!" shrieked the girl. "What does he do—where has he come from? Stanton, you won't give up Vivienne to him?"

"He came with Lord Vaulabel," said Mrs. Colonibel in a high-pitched, wrought-up voice, "who has had him ever since he left here, and Lord Vaulabel has suspected all the time that he had been wrongly treated. He intended to make inquiries while here. Mr. Delavigne would not allow him to do so before now."

"How extraordinary!" gasped Judy.

"And Vivienne has met her father," pursued Mrs. Colonibel, "and it has been discovered that Uncle Colonel trumped up a charge of stealing against Mr. Delavigne because he wished to get rid of him."

"I can well believe it," said Judy contemptuously. "I have never had a great opinion of Uncle Colonel."

"And in spite of this, Mr. Delavigne says he will allow his daughter to marry Stanton, and yet Brian sends me word that the whole thing is at an end. Who has done it? What does it mean?"

Camperdown pointed a finger at Armour's unhappy figure.

"The family will be broken up," exclaimed Mrs. Colonibel, sinking into a chair and putting up her hands to hide her miserable face.

"Stanton, old man, where are you?" and gropingly feeling his way into the room came Valentine, exquisitely dressed and unruffled in appearance. "I hear flying rumors, that knowing you as well as I do, I cannot believe. The happiness that you have so long deserved is now within your grasp. You are not going to ruin your chances?" and he threw his arm over his brother's shoulder.

Armour, like a hunted animal brought to bay, looked desperately at the faces round about him. "I have a conscience," he said brokenly; "I cannot do this thing."

"What thing?" said Judy cuttingly. "Do you mean that you cannot give up your iron will, that you will thrust out the angel of the house? I tell you for one that I sha'n't live here if she goes. Who is going to support us in our disgrace? Who will comfort us I would like to know? I shall never go out; I will starve myself; I will die"; and giving way to a fit of angry sullenness the girl threw herself down beside her mother.

"Joe," said Vivienne softly, "my time has come. Help me in through this window."

Armour had watched the door, but he had not thought of the window, and yet he did not really fancy that Vivienne would transgress his strict command that she should not seek an interview with him but should wait for a letter that he would write to her.

When he saw her coming toward him he retreated against the wall, and averted his eyes from the mingled love and compassion of her glance.

"Stanton," she murmured, stretching out her hand to take his shrinking one.

"Do not touch me," he said hoarsely.

She turned her back on him and faced the other people present. There was no mistaking the joy and triumph of her glance.

"Come," exclaimed Camperdown, "she will manage him. Let us all get out of this," and he began to hurry the other spectators from the room.

However, impetuous as he was, he found himself suddenly brought to a standstill by the entrance of Mammy Juniper, who swept upon him like a whirlwind, candlestick in hand, her black eyes almost starting from her night-capped head, her padded dressing gown flying back from her excited figure. "Praise the Lord! Rejoice greatly! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, salvation has come to the house. The iniquity of Ephraim is discovered that he may repent. . . How great is the goodness of the Lord! How great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful and new wine the maids. The prisoners of hope are released. I took unto me two staves, the one I called Beauty and the other I called Bands, and fed the flock——"

"And we'll hear the rest of your rhapsody in the hall," said Camperdown seizing the old woman kindly but forcibly by the shoulders. "You're very eloquent but slightly discomposing. Come now, give us a stave about the poor Assyrians. Some of them are out of bondage too, now that your worthy master is laid low," and he politely invited Mammy Juniper to the back hall, where he listened for a few minutes to her trumpetings, and then went home without addressing another word to the other members of the excited family.

The fascinated Joe could not make up his mind to leave the window even when Armour and Vivi-

enne were left alone. In intense interest he listened to Vivienne's caressing accents as she addressed the unhappy, agitated man before her.

"So you wish me to go away?" she said.

"Yes," he muttered, "I do. Go now while I have the strength to say it. I am a ruined man."

"Dearer to me in your ruin than in your prosperity," she murmured; "will you, can you drive me from you?"

"Yes," he ejaculated with white lips, and leaning one hand against the wall to steady himself, "I can. Go."

"Good-bye, then," she said softly. "I am too proud a woman to force a man to keep his promise. Good-bye," and she sauntered slowly away.

But that glance over her shoulder! The Indian choked back a barbaric explosion of laughter as he saw it and watched Armour hurrying after her so quickly, that he caught his foot in the silken train of her gown, with a cry of irrepressible love and despair, "I cannot let you go."

Then there was a long silence. "All right now," muttered Joe gleefully. "He much huggum and kissum. He no go crazy like ole man. He marryum in church with flowers and girls to wearum white," and quietly obliterating himself among the shadows of the house, he went in peace and contentment to his camp.

CHAPTER XLI

IN DEEP DESPAIR

JUDY was curled up like a dog on the library door mat. "I will not get up—I will not get up," she cried, groveling at Vivienne's feet, as she came out, "till you tell me that you are not going to leave us."

"I am," said Vivienne; "but you are to go with me."

"With you, my precious?" cried the girl springing to her feet. "Where are you going?"

"To England."

"When?" almost screamed the excited girl.

"To-morrow."

"And Stanton—what is he going to do?"

"Marry me and go too."

"Oh this is delicious," said Judy clasping her around the waist. "I never dreamed of this. Oh I will be good. I shall never get out of temper now," and she sidled in ecstasy up and down the hall.

"My father will accompany us, I hope," said Vivienne. "I wish never to separate from him again. I must go to see him now, the beloved

martyr. I can scarcely believe that he is here; so many wonderful things have happened to-night. My head is in a whirl."

"Don't go," said Judy detaining her. "Mamma gave him the best room in the house, where he has, I hope, quietly gone to sleep. You will see him in a few hours; let us talk some more about England and your marriage. I don't understand perfectly yet. Things have been so rushed that I am confused. Will you explain to me about your father? I thought Uncle Colonel liked him. Why did he wish to get rid of him?

"Dear Judy," and Vivienne drew the girl to a seat beside her, "it seems to me that all the trouble and all the comfort in the world comes through women. You know sometimes men love the women they should not. It is a shocking thing to say, but my father tells me that Colonel Armour loved my mother better than he has ever loved any person in the world."

"Shocking indeed," said Judy, "in plain English, brutal; for I suppose in liking her, his first thought was to get rid of your father."

"Yes, he wished to ruin him, to bring about a separation between him and my mother, and he hoped that my father, being of a sensitive nature, would take his own life, and my mother being proud and hating treachery, would despise his memory and marry him."

"The old wretch!"

"But my mother was more clever than he thought her. She understood his wiles, and though she could prove nothing, she told him that he himself had falsified the books that he accused my father of doing, and that she loved her husband more than ever when he became an unhappy victim."

"And where does MacDaly come in?"

"He overheard a conversation in which my father rebuked Colonel Armour for his obsequious attentions paid to my mother during the absence of her husband. Colonel Armour lost his temper and in a fury dismissed him from his service, declaring that he would ruin him."

"Which he certainly did," interrupted Judy. "It is a strange thing that all this has not been found out before. That creature MacDaly ought to be horsewhipped."

"He was afraid for himself," said Vivivenne, "for it was he that set the warehouse on fire."

"What, MacDaly?"

"Yes, but without an intention of doing it. It happened in this way: he listened to the altercation between my father and Colonel Armour, then went into a place of hiding. No stir was made with regard to the affair, so he issued from his place and loitered about to hear later on a conversation between Colonel Armour and Stanton. Colonel

Armour said that he was coming back that evening to write in the office. This was unusual; MacDaly suspected that it bore on my father's case and resolved to watch. Therefore returning stealthily at an earlier hour than his customary one to the warehouse, he saw Colonel Armour enter and leave his office. MacDaly then crept to the room. He found the safes closed, but he guessed shrewdly that his master had been tampering with the accounts of his clerk. While shuffling over loose papers on the table he mistakenly thought he heard Colonel Armour's returning step. He ran, forgetting a lighted cigar or pipe he had laid down. It set fire to the papers. MacDaly, watching from the wharf, saw the windows bright with flames. He rushed to the spot but he could not extinguish the fire. He feared to call for help, and not till the passers-by saw the blazing building, was an alarm sounded. Then unfortunately, it was too late. The cunning MacDaly hid himself till the fire was over; but Colonel Armour suspected his connection with it, and taxed him with it, only sparing him from exposure because his purpose was to have my father blamed. This is a whip that he has held over MacDaly's head to keep him from making any revelations about my father."

"That if he did he would be punished for setting fire to the building?" said Judy inquiringly.

"Yes, Colonel Armour frightened him by saying

that he would prove that he had done it intentionally, which by the common law is felony. The simple MacDaly knew that his master was rich and powerful, and he did not dare to brave him."

"And how do you feel about it all?"

"It is horrible," whispered Vivienne raising her hands as if to lift some heavy weight from her shoulders. "To think of all these years of agony, my mother's death, my father's martyrdom, Stanton's slow misery, my unhappiness, and all through the sin of one man. Now all seems brightness except the living death that has come upon the one who has caused all this trouble. If he never comes out of it, Judy, if he has no chance for repentance!"

"Don't worry about him," said Judy scornfully. "Think of your father. Hasn't he a sweet face, and isn't he a perfect gentleman? And you and Stanton thought to find him in some cobbler's shop!"

"A cobbler can be a gentleman, Judy."

"Ah, Miss Aristocrat, you've rather changed your opinions since you came to Halifax. By the way, why do we leave so soon as to-morrow? Is it because you are in a hurry to get Stanton away?"

"Yes, Judy."

"And here comes that man you are so proud of. I think I'll go to bed. I've stuff for a dozen nightmares."

CHAPTER XLII

ACROSS THE SEA

SOME weeks later Armour and his wife, with Judy and Mr. Delavigne, installed themselves in a suite of apartments in the principal hotel of a gray old English town. Outside Armour's room ran a narrow iron balcony, and on this balcony he stood one evening, his hands behind his back, his face upturned to the sky.

"What star are your thoughts on?" asked Vivienne softly, as she came to the open window.

"One called Vivienne; won't you come out?" he said. "It is very warm."

"It seems to me that you think a very great deal about that star," she said roguishly as she accepted the mute invitation of his arm to come and stand beside him.

He wrapped her white-furred dressing gown more closely about her and stowed her long hair in a hood at the back of it. "Now I can see your face. Why should I not think of you, Vivienne? You are a constant source of interest to me with your pretty feminine ways. I don't think women understand how odd it is for a man who has always lived

to himself to have some woman about him with her constant care of him, and her questions as to why he does this thing and that thing and what he is thinking about."

Vivienne laughed merrily. "Is that why you watch me with such profound interest when I mend your gloves, and why you looked at me in such surprise when I went to your rescue the other day as you struggled with an obstinate necktie?"

"Yes; you are a very fearful and wonderful creation to me at all times; but when I think of you with all your attributes you are a mystery."

"You are not a mystery to me," said Vivienne. "I understand you and I am satisfied. Over there is a rookery, Stanton. In the morning you will hear such a cawing."

"And yonder is the school where you used to sit and look over the trees toward Canada?"

"Yes, Stanton."

"And read my brief, cold letters, darling? I wish I had known what I know now. How differently I should have written."

"Yes, I used to read them there, but they did not worry me so very much."

"And it was there," he said, "that you, one year ago, put up the photograph to send to me that was to make such a change in my life."

"Yes, my dear husband, it was. Madame Dubois and I were spending the summer here."

"I have never told you of the day that I received it, Vivienne. I was exceedingly busy, and in the midst of my rush of work I unfastened the string on the cardboard, and there was your face looking serenely at me. I was completely upset by your surprising likeness to your father, and at once the project of having you come to Canada flashed into my mind. I thought, surely if my father were confronted with you, the daughter of a woman that he had virtually murdered—for I believe if it had not been for him your mother would be alive to-day—his toughened conscience would be touched."

"What became of the photograph? You have never told me."

Armour blushed slightly. "I am ashamed to say that I tore it up. I almost hated you in those days; for I thought if the Delavignes had never been born, my father would not have been tempted to commit the crime of his life. I would give a thousand dollars to have it again."

"Five shillings will get you one," said Vivienne lightly. "We will visit the photographer to-morrow, and I will order one like it."

Armour was silent for a time. Then he said thoughtfully, "I wonder how affairs are going on at home."

"We know that Stargarde goes to the cottage every day to weep and pray beside your father," said Vivienne softly, and Flora is happy with the

housekeeping, and Valentine practises—ah, Stanton, that first Sunday he sang in church, when he stood beside the organ and raised his calm face to sing 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,' I could not keep back the tears. How glad he will be to have us home again."

"How long do you wish to stay away, Vivienne?" asked Armour.

"Until you are happy in returning."

"I could go back to-morrow."

"Stanton!" and she looked up at his face which was illumined by the gaslight from the room behind.

"Yes," he said firmly. "I see now that there is no place to retrieve a lost reputation like one's own home. If acquaintances of long standing are more curious and critical than strangers they are also more compassionate. The people of Halifax are my people. My father has sinned among them and among them will I endeavor, God helping me, to make what amendment I can for his sins, and for my own sins of pride and obstinacy, and begin my new life where I lived the old."

Vivienne surveyed him in passionate affection. "I thank heaven every day of my life that I have married a man who is strong enough to acknowledge his weakness, and who knows where to look for aid. Ah, the Divine guidance, Stanton, what should we do without it?" And standing with her hand in

her husband's, she repeated slowly the words of one of her beloved Canadian poets :

"Forever constant to the good
Still arm our faith, thou Guard sublime,
To scorn, like all who've understood,
The atheist dangers of the time.

"Thou hearest ! Lo, we feel our love
Of loyal thoughts and actions free
Tow'rd all divine achievement move,
Ennobled, blest, ensured, by Thee."